Week ending August 23 1947

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JOHN BULL

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by Edmund Antrobus

FACTS BEHIND PARALYSIS SCARE

by Harvey Graham, M.D.

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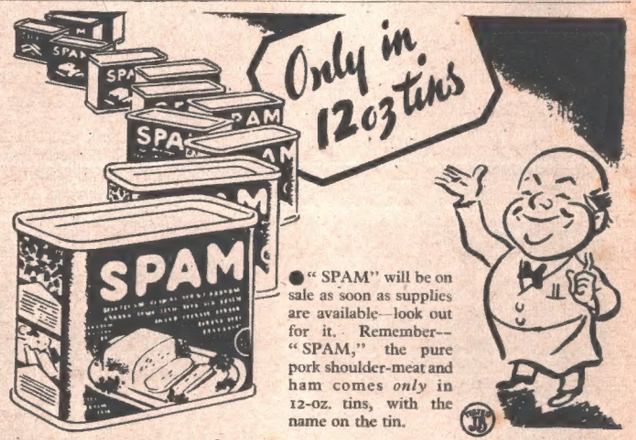

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JOHN BULL

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AUGUST 23, 1947 VOL. 82 NO. 2147

What We Grow, We Eat!

THE BRITISH HOUSEWIFE this week enjoys one slight relaxation of austerity in the form of sugar for jam-making. She gets this little "extra" because most of our sugar comes from beet grown on British farms. We don't pay dollars for it.

Which is a reminder to everyone of the enormously increased importance of home agriculture. We can't have an extra pound of meat at present, however hungry we are. But we *can* have an extra pound of sugar. We grew it; we can eat it.

A nation with a sweet tooth, like ours, ought to appreciate this, and therefore ought at last to remember the land and the people who work on it.

What we are now doing with sugar we can and must do with other basic foods. The Government's declared policy of raising another £100,000,000 worth of food from our own soil will be effective only if we make it so.

Intentions are not enough. Ceaseless energy and ingenuity must be poured into our farming industry. Tom Williams, as the Minister responsible, will have to work as he has never worked before.

First, of course, comes bigger production, which will involve helping the farmer in every possible way—and finding a lot of new workers. A close second to this comes distribution. There must be no more shilly-shallying with the scandals of marketing. Even when things were easier we couldn't afford to waste food because the middlemen wanted so much profit that the farmers' products never reached the housewife. To tolerate this kind of thing now would be suicidal.

We can have an abundant supply of cheap vegetables if we insist on organizing it in a sensible way that will eliminate obstructive profiteers. And larders full of vegetables will help to fill our stomachs and keep us fit while we work for prosperity.

Make the Spivs Work

SO FAR MR. ATTLEE'S rather mild threat to turn them into decent workers has not driven any of the spivs and drones into the mines and factories. Nor—let us face the facts squarely—will any threats or words ever achieve this.

There is only one thing which will force these useless citizens to pull their weight, and that is action of the most drastic kind.

All fit and able men of working age—and many women—not now in regular employment should be compelled to show reason why they should not be put to work in the mines, in the factories, on the land, on the railways—in any useful job where they can earn the food and other means of subsistence which other people are now working harder to buy for them.

True, this smacks of conscription. But, equally true, productive workers can hardly be expected to face food and other cuts while something like a million fit men and women idle away their time on racecourses, at dog tracks, in clubs and night haunts, or living in expensive hotels on the proceeds of profitable black market deals.

The clean-up must start right away. And while they are on the job the Home Secretary and the Minister of Labour should remember that all the spivs do not come from the East End. They are everywhere, in every walk of life. With the drones, they are to be found in Mayfair as well as in the slums, in the black country as well as in Bloomsbury and Chelsea, and wearing old school ties as well as spiv neckwear.

Get after them!

Colonies: the New Outlook

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY is moving house today. His Ministry, with all its plans, documents and furniture, is going from the old place in Downing Street to the new place in Great Smith Street.

But when Mr. Creech Jones settles down about ten days from now, in a nice clean office with a different view, he will find the same old problems staring at him.

Palestine is the thorniest one. And to terrorism in Palestine is now added terrorism in Britain. The recent outbreaks of anti-Semitism in Manchester, Liverpool and elsewhere are vile and contemptible. They are the reaction of weak minds here to the atrocities in Palestine, which, in turn, are the result of failure to grapple successfully with the Zionist problem.

If that problem really is insoluble, then Creech Jones will do well, in his new building, to concentrate on a new policy—pulling out of Palestine quickly.

Fortunately, he has a brighter prospect in his Department's progress with colonial development schemes. The Colonies have always been the Cinderella of the Empire. It has taken an economic crisis, and the cutting off of much of our normal supplies, to make this nation realize what vast wealth lies waiting in the neglected corners of Africa, the West Indies and Asia.

People who used to take American beefsteaks for granted now think longingly of Nigerian peanuts. It looks as though what was once sneeringly called the white man's burden will soon become a part of the white man's salvation.

And in the process Creech Jones will be able at last to do some measure of justice to the native races whose economic and social needs have hitherto been grossly neglected.

From being one of London's quieter spots, the Colonial Office, in its new setting, is likely to become one of the busiest.

Royal Wedding Forethought

NO WOOD, STEEL OR LABOUR is to be expended on building stands along the route of Princess Elizabeth's wedding procession. This is a realistic decision.

We cannot afford these frivolities, and all who want to show their loyalty by cheering the Princess and her consort can do so just as well from the pavements.

But the fact that there are to be no stands will inevitably stimulate the sale of places at windows overlooking the processional route. Prices will certainly be fantastic, if nothing is done to curb them.

Now it is obviously wrong both that any private citizen should make money out of a Royal wedding, and that, just because the King decides that his daughter shall ride along a particular street, the owners of window space shall be able to profiteer.

JOHN BULL asks Chuter Ede, the Home Secretary, and Hugh Dalton, the Chancellor, to take note of this. Between them, they should be able to work out ways of arresting any window-seat racket before it begins. If money is to be extracted from sightseers, it ought to benefit the taxpayer who, when all's said and done, puts on the show.

The Lady Mary Blanger, whose family holds one of England's oldest peerages, cares for her complexion with Pond's

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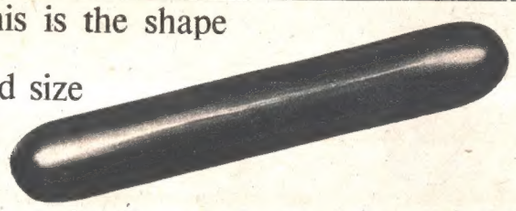

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but it's the test of taste that matters. So smooth and rich is the chocolate, so crisp and good is the biscuit inside. And you get 20 or more in a quarter pound! Your grocer may not always have them, but when he can supply you, how delightfully you will be rewarded for asking. Price 2/4d. a pound.

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Chocolate Table Fingers

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says Mrs. Price

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REACTION against immigrants is fostered by a hostile Congress and such diehard women's groups as Daughters of the American Revolution (above)

REUNION brings tears as a Polish refugee meets his sister in New York for the first time in twenty-three years. Few exiles are so fortunate

"NO ENTRY" ON THE GOLDEN DOOR

by EDMUND ANTROBUS

While the eyes of Europe's unwanted D.P.s turn longingly westwards, U.S. legislators are seeking to bar, not open, the way to the Land of the Free

THERE ARE TWO POWERFUL LADIES in America whose conflicting points of view and contradictory statements are causing a good deal of confusion in the minds of the "displaced persons" of Europe and Asia.

One of them is the Madam President of the D.A.R. (Daughters of the American Revolution, a powerful reactionary woman's organization) who resolved at her annual conference to limit immigration to keep out the D.P.s. The other is a tall lady in a nightshirt who stands, beckoning in the traffic, at the mouth of the New York Harbour.

Equally as decisive as Madame President of the D.A.R., she states in bold Roman letters, carved on a block of stone at her feet:

Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses, yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore;
Send these, the homeless, tempest tossed to me;
I lift my lamp beside the golden door.

A million and a half D.P.s in Europe and Asia are desperate to enter America's "golden door." Yet only by juggling with legislation can even twenty-six per cent of these be admitted during the next few years.

Americans once cherished the idea that the immigrant, fleeing from social injustice in Europe, enriched the American soil of freedom. He had a good status.

But today's attitude towards the luckless D.P., adopted wholeheartedly by the provincial minds which dominate Congress, is that he is a sort of shiftless tramp, something close to a criminal whose motive in wanting to come to America is to get out of trouble.

This brand of displaced thinking was displayed recently during a hearing of the House Immigration Committee. A Congressman, opposing a bill to allow D.P.s to immigrate, declared: "We can't let them in; they're all Communists." This is exactly what they are not, but the fact that the Congressman thinks they are Communists and that others think so, too, is the fundamental American misunderstanding of the whole score. (A great many of them are nationals of Slavic countries, and that is a different and older story which I will come to in a minute.)

Of the 800,000 D.P.s who decline to go back to their prewar homes, the majority are Poles, Jugoslavs and refugees from the Baltic states, who, for various political reasons, don't want to return to Soviet dominated territory. Some 82,000 are Ukrainians; they are in the same category. Roughly 170,000, not more than a fifth of the total number, are Jews, many of whom fear the anti-Semitism still rampant in Poland.

It is ludicrous but very tragic that the Congressman and others talk of the D.P.s as Communists. This belief is one of the biggest factors militating against their reception in America.

No More Tail-Twisting

Displaced thinking like this will, if they are not careful, deprive America of its favourite sport: twisting the lion's tail. Unless Americans open their arms to the displaced persons as human beings and try to help the inmates of concentration camps and the victims of the Third Reich, they will have to give up condemnation of the British in Palestine.

Although the majority of Jews still cling tenaciously to the hope of Palestine, a growing number would be willing to go to any country where they could rebuild their lives. Many of the Jewish and non-Jewish displaced persons have relatives in America whom they wish to join. Others look to the United States as a traditional asylum for human beings in need of a new life.

But help is frustrated by the drastic, copper-riveted immigration laws. Washington would rather tamper with the belief in God than with these laws. In 1924, Congress passed a bill to limit the admission of persons from Southern and Eastern Europe. Today, most of the D.P.s stranded in Germany are nationals of Slavic Eastern European countries and the 1924 immigration ruling still operates against them.

Why has not the law been modified? The answer is that the present reactionary Congress is almost identical in mood to the crackpot Congress which dominated the country after the first World War and made the immigration laws which are followed to the letter today.

It is hard to portray to Britain, which has never had to manage a great influx of immigration, how a quota system works. A British reader might wonder why a restriction was put on nationals from Eastern and Southern Europe in the first place.

The story starts quite a long way back. America was unprejudiced about the Slavic immigrant until the railways were built at the end of the nineteenth century and the West was developed. The Slavs provided cheap labour which was gratefully received. But a time came when the work was done. The Slavs with their sons and daughters—the great cheap labour pool of the nineteenth century—drifted back to the cities and there antagonized the higher-paid Anglo-Saxon workers who feared being supplanted by a labour supply which was content with lower wages and a lower standard of living.

Eastern Europeans were given invidious labels: "Polacks" for Poles, "Hunkies" or "Bohunks" for Hungarians, and so on, nicknames which carried prejudice and disparagement for their ways and customs. The longer-settled Irish, British, Germans, Dutch and Scandinavians had no instinct to understand them and no desire to try.

American prejudice against the Slavic people was reinforced by the conservative labour unions of the period. By 1924 prejudice was complete and the law was passed to limit further immigration.

Ironically enough, the limited quotas for Eastern and Southern Europe were never filled; the fantastic fear of a huge tidal wave of Slavs didn't come off. The ban against them remained, however, and although most sensible people thought the law

should be changed, nothing was done because not enough Slavs wanted to come in to make it a live issue.

Now we are faced with a very real need to revise the old law. Legislation has been proposed but nothing has been done. Congress, like the one in 1924, far from attempting to meet the crisis, shrinks, conserves and counts the dollars it saves by not filling the unused quotas of the past twenty years.

Poland, which has probably more candidates for a new life than anyone else, has a quota of only 6,524 nationals a year. In Germany, Polish nationals constitute the bulk of the refugee population. The Polish waiting list, at the present rate, won't be taken care of for years.

It is understandable, therefore, that the question Polish Jewish leaders ask most of Americans is: Why won't you give the refugees the unused immigration quotas of Germany and Austria that accumulated during the war years when both their armies were killing Jews?

If the plight of the D.P. was as vividly imprinted in the Christian mission minds of the ladies who belong to the D.A.R. as is the loin-clothed African native or the "heathen" Chinese, possibly they would do something to help him. But at the moment America is suffering from a kind of guilt complex about the unfortunates of the world.

Like many families which have started humbly, fought hard, worked hard, and eventually attained comfort, the Great American Family likes to remember its homely past in only superficial ways. The "homeless, tempest-tossed" of this war are poor, certainly without visible means of support. Perhaps it is because the Great American Family *does* remember poverty so acutely that it is afraid of being brought into contact with it again.

A million and a half displaced persons and 800,000 who decline to go home present a problem more delicate than difficult for Congress. It has faced it so far by falling back on a characteristic formula: When in doubt stop spending.

The House Foreign Affairs Committee has approved American participation in the International Refugee Organization, which will take over administration of D.P.s where U.N.R.R.A. left off. But it will achieve nothing beyond temporary relief. The Russians will have nothing to do with the I.R.O. as they still want forced repatriation or forced assimilation of the D.P.s into the German and Austrian populations.

A Ray of Hope

The only really bright hope for the D.P.s in America is the Stratton Bill, recently introduced into Congress. It would admit 400,000 D.P.s to the States over a four-year period.

Proposers of the Bill argue that during the war years 1,076,733 persons were entitled to immigrate. But, because of the war, only 161,971 were actually admitted, leaving 914,762 quota numbers unused. The Bill would ignore the distribution of these quota numbers by country and would make use of something under half of them in a period of four years.

As can be imagined, the Stratton Bill has been resented loudly by home Tory groups, who feel that immigration pollutes the Anglo-Saxon purity of the country. The chairman of the House Judiciary sub-committee, who doesn't favour the bill, has interpreted—to his own annoyance—the telegrams and letters from Americans who want it passed as: "A very definite propaganda movement from all over the country." Let us hope he is right and that more telegrams follow.

The Statue of Liberty and the verse at its base might as well be thrown into a dark corner if the survivors of slavery were allowed now to perish of slow liberation.

Priestley's Page

John Bull readers and J. B. Priestley work as a team... Readers think up the subjects, Priestley comments on them

Q. "In my opinion, black market operators are as criminal as the Nazis. Should they not be outlawed?"

THOUGH I dislike black market operators—or, at least, I dislike the idea of them, for I never remember having met any of them personally—it is an exaggeration to say they are as criminal as the Nazis.

There is a wide gulf between dealing illegally in eggs or whisky or stockings, and shovelling thousands of human beings into gas chambers.

The chief remedy against the black marketeers is in the hands of the public itself, which, by refusing to deal with them, can make it not worth their while to continue operations.

It is true that many people may deal quite innocently in the black market, but at some level there must be people who are quite deliberately encouraging this illegal and anti-social traffic.

And, from what I have seen of countries that have large black markets, there can be no doubt whatever in my mind that this traffic has a powerful corrupting influence upon a whole nation.

Q. "Does the present world-wide unrest restrict the output of creative artists, or, on the other hand, is it an inspiration?"

UNREST of the present day is extremely bad for creative artists. We are indeed plainly suffering from it. Periods of great political and social upheaval have never been good for the arts.

An artist needs a fairly settled society. How can a man create fine works of art during a series of earthquakes?

I do not believe that I am merely suffering from middle-aged prejudice if I declare that there was more good writing, music, painting produced in England during the ten years before 1914 (the beginning of the modern earthquake age) than in all the thirty-three years since that date.

Artists may be inspired by great historical upheavals years afterwards, as Tolstoy was by Napoleon's invasion of Russia in his *War and Peace*, but Tolstoy, in order to compose his great prose epic, needed the comparative peace and tranquility of the mid-nineteenth century, which, incidentally produced more good novels than any other period before or since.

If the world should reach an age of reasonable security, then the artists may find themselves inspired by the terrible events of our age, and the public, able at last to give their minds to the appreciation of art, may fully enjoy their work.

But before that can happen, there will have to be a great deal of tidying up and settling down, and we are certainly not within sight of such a world yet.

Q. "Hitherto members of the Diplomatic Corps have been recruited from one class of society. Should the field of recruitment be widened?"

IT has now been agreed by both the Labour and Conservative parties that the field of recruitment should be widened. But I do not believe that this settles the question.

If diplomacy is to be regarded as a career, it is possible that, no matter from what class of society its recruits come, they will soon be turned into the same kind of people, taking their tone from their seniors.

I am not convinced that it is necessary that an ambassador or minister should be a career diplomat. There is much to be said in favour of the system under which ambassadors and ministers are specially appointed, as they are in America.

Let us take an example. We need a minister for Ruritania, which used to be a monarchy but is now, we will say, a Socialist republic. What is likely to happen is that Brown is moved on from Bolivia, although Brown, a career diplomat, may dislike Socialism and know nothing about the sort of people who are now running Ruritania.

Thus he may easily make a bad minister—though no doubt he will do his best there—simply because he is unfitted by his training and outlook to do justice to the Ruritanian situation.

On the other hand, Smith, who is not a career diplomat but an engineer who used to know Ruritania very well, might make a far better minister, simply because he brings knowledge and sympathy to the job.

At present we have too many Browns representing us and not enough Smiths. This is not an attack on the Browns, who no doubt are doing their best, but on the system of career diplomacy.

And at a time of rapid transition, like this, we might do better to abandon career diplomacy, at least on the higher levels, and to make *ad hoc* appointments of ambassadors and ministers.

At present too many official representatives of Britain are anything but representative of the new Britain.

Q. "Why, generally speaking, do young people nowadays show less respect and courtesy to their elders?"

A COMPLAINT that is one of the two oldest in the world. (The other, which dates as far back as Ancient Egypt, being that women are less modest than they used to be, and now paint their faces, etc., etc.)

Every generation has always discovered that the young people show less respect and courtesy to their elders.

Nevertheless, of course, it may be true of these days. But is it?

I come across plenty of young people and they certainly show me as much respect and courtesy as I want or deserve.

Therefore I doubt if this criticism of young people is justified.

But if it should be true, then a possible explanation might be that, having arrived within sight of maturity in a world that is half in ruins, the young people find it difficult to have any respect for the elders responsible for this world.

There is most respect for age in a prosperous and solidly established society, where it is apparent to all that the older folk had once done a good job.

Facts Behind

THE PARALYSIS SCARE

by HARVEY GRAHAM, M.D.

John Bull's doctor reports on the campaign that science is waging against an elusive scare-germ responsible for the worst "paralysis" epidemic in the history of Britain

FOR MANY YEARS THIS COUNTRY has been lucky. Other parts of the world have been devastated by epidemics of infantile paralysis, but up to two months ago Britain had never had a real epidemic.

Now we are involved in an experience that has become all too familiar in, for example, America and Australia.

Almost every day the newspapers have been reporting many more cases and a few more deaths.

What will happen in the next few months? What can we do about it? These are some of the questions which are being asked everywhere.

Infantile paralysis is an old disease. It was known in Ancient Egypt about 3700 B.C. Most countries have some experience of it, but in recent years America has had by far the worst and most widespread epidemics. Most European countries know the disease only as we do. Each year they have a few hundred cases but there have been no spectacular outbreaks.

Many British doctors saw more cases while serving abroad with the Army than they ever did in their own practices. In the middle of the war there was an outbreak of infantile paralysis in Egypt and an even larger outbreak in Malta. In 1943 there were 426 Maltese children involved and fifty-seven British soldiers. In Egypt 106 members of our Middle East Forces were attacked by infantile paralysis, and thirty-three died.

Name is Misleading

Here is one of the odd things about infantile paralysis. It was called "infantile paralysis" because it affected infants and it caused paralysis of one or more limbs. In recent years it has attacked older children and adults much more often and in many cases it has cleared up without leaving any kind of paralysis.

That is why doctors prefer the non-committal name "poliomyelitis" rather than "infantile paralysis," which is now a misnomer.

In this century Britain has had only two appreciable outbreaks of the disease. In 1926 we had more than 1,100 cases, and in 1938 more than 1,400. In other years there have been only a few hundred cases.

There was a big drop in the number of cases after the 1938 outbreak. Nobody knows why, just as nobody knows why 1947 is bringing what promises to be almost an "American experience" of poliomyelitis in Great Britain.

We do know that it has nothing to do with rationing, atomic energy, or the economic crisis—which is not much help.

In 1946 there were 25,000 cases in the U.S.A. This was not a bad year. American doctors still recall 1916 when in New York alone there were 1,200 cases in one week.

We are not likely to see anything like the American record numbers of cases here. The first indication of trouble this year came in the second week in June when there were thirty-one cases notified in England and Wales. Since 1939 notifications had rarely reached thirty in any one week, and the rise up to about thirty usually appeared at the end of July. Poliomyelitis is a seasonal disease. It appears in the summer. In an epidemic such as this there is often a peak in the late summer, a falling-off for several weeks, and a second peak about October.

After the thirty-one cases in the week ending June 14 the figures rose abruptly in each successive week—44, 56, 79, 110. [Last year the corresponding figures for the same successive weeks were 13, 8, 9, 12.] Then comparison with other years became valueless; the figures rocketed to 302 cases in a week, and then 448. Routine statistics suddenly had news value.

At present we are nearing the first peak of this epidemic. After the second peak, in October, the winter should at least bring this epidemic to an end—whatever other trials it has in store for us.

Defeats Microscope

Poliomyelitis is caused by a filter-passing virus—a germ so small that it cannot be seen even under the microscope. There is no satisfactory explanation of its geographical distribution, its mode of spread, and its tendency in recent years to attack adults. There is no explanation of the immunity conferred by one attack. A few people have been attacked twice in a lifetime but such cases are very rare.

The virus has been recovered from flies. It has also been found on fruit. Strawberries have been shown to be responsible for small outbreaks. It seems that swimming pools may be contaminated with the virus, though no one has convincing proof of this.

Patients go on excreting the virus which has attacked them for some weeks. Where sewage control is perfect, this is not important. Where it is less than perfect, flies feeding on sewage containing the virus may later contaminate fruit or food. Or the sewage may seep into rivers or water-supplies or swimming baths so that they become possible sources of infection.

Flies, water, and fruit, therefore, are all possible—repeat *possible*—vehicles for spreading infection. There is also evidence suggesting that infection may perhaps be spread by minute droplets coughed or sneezed from the mouth and throat. The virus can be found in the mouth and throat during the early acute stage of poliomyelitis.

Recently it was collected from the throats of apparently healthy schoolchildren who had been in contact with a case. That is why doctors will not operate on tonsils and adenoids during an outbreak of infantile paralysis. The virus on the surface of the throat may do no harm at all. Operate on the child's nose or throat and you may open the way for a dangerous infection.

Coughing or sneezing may spray droplets containing the virus directly into the air. someone else is breathing or on to food someone else is going to eat. But food is more likely to be contaminated by people who are excreting the virus and failing to wash their hands frequently.

Recovering and identifying the virus is technically very difficult. So there is no possibility at present of large-scale identification of apparently healthy "carriers" by the kind of tests now well-known and easily applied to, say, typhoid carriers.

Water treatment is applied to a two-year-old patient. But most victims, today, are adults

Despite all these possibilities of infection it is very uncommon to have more than one case in any family. Other members of the family often get the virus but either they have no symptoms at all or else they suffer only some vague minor illness to which little attention is paid. These are probably the people responsible for the spread of the disease.

Those are some of the facts. They do not make a coherent picture and that is why the steps taken to prevent the spread of the disease lack coherence.

In one area it may be that the first few cases seem to be related to the local swimming bath. That swimming bath will be closed. Similar cases in the next village may all be from the same school. There it may seem more rational to close the school and leave the swimming bath open. The local answer to the local problem must be worked out in the light of local conditions.

These local variations about cinemas and schools and baths, and whether they should stay open or be closed down, are neither neat nor tidy. But poliomyelitis is an untidy sort of disease.

Information from all over the world has been pooled and despite the apparent local anomalies, doctors everywhere are working according to certain general principles which most authorities accept.

All the schools are closed at present for the summer holidays. Most of them will reopen normally. Closure of day schools is not advised unless there are many cases in one school. The chances of infection are not great and even if a school has one or two cases there is not much point in closing it. If the school closes children will have more time to play with other children and there is still much the same degree of contact.

School Doctors Can Watch

Keeping the schools open has the advantage, too, that the children can be closely watched by school doctors and health visitors who could not possibly get round to see all the children in their own homes. A day nursery or a nursery school presents a different problem and will probably be closed for three weeks if even a single case occurs.

Though schools remain open it is probably best for the brothers and sisters of a known case to stay away for three weeks. They may be "carriers" of the virus and so they should be "in quarantine" for that time. "Quarantine" implies a comparative isolation which is seldom fully effective. It is certainly not effective enough to make it worth while to impose it so rigidly as to interfere with adult occupations and the usual activities of the community.

Decisions about these and other points are the concern of the doctors and the local M.O.H. But there are two decisions that everyone can

make for themselves. First—not to panic. Secondly—to take some obvious commonsense precaution.

Don't panic for obvious reasons. Suppose this epidemic does end with a grand total of 10,000 cases—which is just possible. There are more than 40,000,000 people in this country. So the chances of any one individual getting the disease are 4,000 to one against. You have many more chances of being knocked down while crossing the road, but you don't conduct your whole life with that in mind.

Take the following simple precautions. Wash all fruit really well, or if it is that kind of fruit, peel it. Have a fly-swat and some D.D.T. in use, but keep the D.D.T. away from food. Keep your children away from swimming pools. And, with or without any kind of epidemic, they are probably better playing in the open air than sitting still in a crowded cinema. Oddly enough, the same applies to adults—for the next three months at any rate. Over the same period it would probably be better to avoid baby shows and children's summer camps.

Most important of all, take colds, sore throats, tiredness, headaches, or even any inexplicable irritability fairly seriously. Most minor ailments require no treatment and get better rapidly. But for the next three months if you or your children are in any way out of sorts, don't dismiss it too lightly. In particular, if a child or a youngster complains of drowsiness or a stiff neck, act promptly. Put the child to bed and send for your doctor.

Isolate the child in one room if you can and for the rest be guided by your general practitioner. Remember, too, that in the very early stages of poliomyelitis over-exertion is dangerous. In some cases it seems to precipitate a particularly severe type of paralysis. A child who is flushed or feverish should be kept quiet and as much at rest as possible until it is clear that the condition is something trivial and not the early stages of poliomyelitis. Playing games, swimming, or any over-exertion when the disease is just developing may mean that your doctor is faced with a difficult case of paralysis instead of a case in the early pre-paralytic stage.

Keep the risks, real though they are, in perspective. In many people the virus of poliomyelitis causes neither symptoms nor ill-effects. In some people it causes only a minor illness with no paralysis of any kind. Only in a few is there a major and serious attack. These are the cases that are notified each week.

Half Recover Completely

With modern treatment and good nursing fifty per cent of these cases recover completely; twenty-five per cent are left with some very minor handicap—perhaps a slight limp; only twenty per cent are fairly seriously handicapped and only five per cent or less of these patients die.

Treatment is usually supervised by specialists but its results depend on devoted nursing. Sister Kenny did good service in stressing this point even though she stressed it for the wrong reasons.

Summing up, this is an epidemic. It is Britain's first real epidemic of this disease and it will be another three months before we are out of the wood.

Doctors do not yet know enough about the disease to control it completely. Their task is difficult. It is not helped by public alarm for which there is really no need.

The chances for every individual are better than good. The chances for every sufferer have improved steadily.

There is no occasion for alarm and despondency. But there is every reason for taking a little more care at the present time. I've told you how to go about that.

Private View of Cecil Beaton

TASTE AND TEMPERAMENT

AMONG THOSE CELEBRATED ENTITIES who played hard enough to make the 1920s fizz, and are now treading cautiously and reluctantly into middle age, a few like Cecil Beaton remain on the ascent.

Greying and distinguished looking, sobered by what he saw and rollieflexed in nearly every theatre of war, Beaton has settled down to extend his fame as a photographer to that of an artist and designer.

He was successful with the decor and dresses for Gielgud's production of *Lady Windermere's Fan* last year (facsimiles were re-created for Broadway where Beaton also played the part of Cecil Graham), and now he is under contract to Korda as artistic adviser for the two pictures London Films are making at Shepperton.

It all began when Cecil Beaton's timber merchant father gave him a 3a Pocket Kodak to play with as a kid. Possessing, even then, the sort of artistic temperament that was certain to lead him to a Chelsea success, Beaton got cracking on his sisters (now Lady Smiley and Mrs. Hambro). He snapped them draped in curtains and sheets and holding lilies. He treated the negatives and retouched the prints until his first willing sitters appeared as creatures quite out of this world.

That 3a Kodak became a relic with a history. It accompanied Beaton through Harrow where they discovered he had flat feet, excused him games and let him go sketching farmyard subjects. It was at hand at Cambridge where Beaton was an academic failure though a highlight of the Amateur Dramatic Club, and he was using it long after he had become the most talked of photographer in London, Paris and New York.

With it he photographed Gertrude Lawrence and Anna May Wong, Lady Oxford, Lily Langtry, the Marchesa de Casa Maury, and a gallery of others—posed among bubbles, blossoms and Cellophane, in sequins and exotic period creations, with their heads in glass domes or pretending to be Siamese twins.

Cecil Beaton became a professional photographer after an exhibition of his work at Cambridge, where the paintings made scarcely the ripple of an impression but the photographs caught on.

His sitters were the bright young things of the twenties, the debutantes, the talented and the up-and-coming. Beaton was lucky. He was popular. In an age when boredom was considered a social evil, and a bore something worse than a Colorado beetle, Beaton was exciting and quite inspired in his attempt to exploit the photograph as a means of artistic expression.

He charged £50 a sitting and only photographed the people he liked. They were always the "best people"—who would never dream of soliciting his services for fear of a snub. They merely waited hopefully, asked him to parties, fêted him, petted him. If, in return, he invited them to his studio, it was a social triumph.

In 1937, at the height of his notoriety, Beaton produced his first *Scrap Book* with an intimate commentary on the beauties he had photographed. One beauty thrust a white-hot poker through it.

He had photographed Marlene Dietrich in bed with a head cold and no make-up. The incident read: "She whipped out of bed and posed in every conceivable position, concluding with a pleading attitude on the floor, with her head against the tablecloth, starry-eyed, lips apart, yearning towards the empty teacups and the remains of the marzipan cakes above her."

Beaton today lives with his mother in a small house in Pelham Place, London. The heart of this house is his study-cum-sitting-room, a jungle of bric-a-brac and a gallery for Dali, Bérard, Francis Rose and Tchelitchew.

There are shelves for art books and first editions, the walls are lined with crimson flock, the floor carpeted with a soft, green, silky pile. The desk belonged to Talleyrand and there is other Louis Seize furniture to match.

Next door is Beaton's bedroom. Here he might lie abed till late of a morning, in brilliant pyjamas, writing or designing.

After lunch he will probably visit new exhibitions and then have tea; he drinks it without milk or sugar. Back at home again he works into the early hours of the morning. Weekends he writes the current Beaton book, or goes down to a newly acquired William and Mary house at Broadchalke, Wiltshire, and designs interiors.

For the Korda film, *An Ideal Husband*, Beaton did designs for 750 costumes in just six weeks. Designing a dress is only the start of a complex, artistic equation which involves fitting the dress to an actress with temperament—and a figure to be enhanced at one end and restrained at another. Fittings are tempestuous affairs, and though a lot of women are conditioned to flare up and forget soon after, Cecil Beaton can't; he brings his indignation home and lets it out on his immediate circle.

KIND by nature (he never forgets to visit sick friends) and hypersensitive, he hates rows at the studio because they mean a lot to him. He never forgets an insult and is, therefore, bad at compromises. Though Beaton worries a lot—and much of his nervous exhaustion results from the nightmare of being told, suddenly, that after a hearty lunch an actress can't get her corset on—the emotional no-man's-land of the wardrobe department has its lighter moments.

One actress, who is shortly to charm us in Technicolor, has a waist that needed drawing in to conform with the asphyxiated standards of the 1880s. For her a special corset was devised, made at enormous expense (£35).

Wearing it was another matter. She appeared on the set unable to speak; her respiration had nearly stopped. She walked with agony and her face showed it. She sat about as gracefully as a kangaroo would in a straitjacket. But the part required charm and grace of deportment.

So the corset was cut down and altered. Stays were removed and the affair rendered practically useless until it was discovered she had been wearing it upside down.

DENNIS HOLMAN

RUM GO

by JOHN DAVIES

ILLUSTRATED BY CRITCHLOW

It was Christmas Eve when the *Spiteful* got her orders to go into action. It needed a lot to raise the morale of the crew —and suddenly a lot happened

He heaved with all his strength, but the door wouldn't budge. Then Buster tapped him excitedly on the shoulder

JOCK MACLEOD proceeded sedately up the River Clyde in the tug *Firefly*. After a busy day down at the Tail o' the Bank, a day devoted to the mysteries in which tugs engage, Jock was taking the *Firefly* back to her base at Port Glasgow.

Curtains of cold, driving rain were sweeping across the river, dashing against the canvas dodger of the *Firefly's* bridge. Above the dodger appeared Jock's face, a small sharp face from which small, sharp eyes squinted out into the gathering darkness.

A typical winter night was settling down. Greenock had already disappeared into the gloom on the *Firefly's* starboard quarter. Up in Glasgow the fog was gathering. And at 38 Ardrossan Street, Port Glasgow, Mrs. Jock was preparing a fine, red-hot supper for her man.

But Jock was still a good hour away from that supper. He was wet, cold, hungry and bored—bored because the straight run home up river was of very little interest for a man of his calibre.

Jock stamped up and down the tug's bridge, pipe clenched upside down between the five teeth that remained to him, and scanned the river in front. First there seemed nothing before the *Firefly's* bows but watery emptiness. Yet his much-practised eyes focused for a long time upon a point directly ahead, and gradually verified the presence of a long, grey shape upon the water.

FARTHER up the river that same night there was a scene of gloom of a different kind. This time it had nothing to do with darkness, wetness or cold, for it prevailed now in an environment which was brilliantly lit, undeniably dry, and if anything, somewhat overheated. In short it very definitely prevailed that evening upon the seamen's messdeck of the destroyer *Spiteful*.

There were perhaps twenty men on the messdeck, beguiling their leisure after the manner of sailors, but without any of the sailor's usual exuberance. At the starboard messtable a game of dominoes was proceeding in silence, a remarkable state of affairs in itself, for half the popularity of the game of dominoes in His Majesty's ships rests upon the excellent opportunities it gives for the exercise of the sailor's unique gift for comment and gratuitous abuse.

Above the table, immediately over the domino game, was slung a hammock. A great naked foot and a massive, calloused hand protruding from the hammock showed that it was occupied. The hand scratched the foot gently and with great care, but the owner of both remained silent and invisible.

This was another slight but significant indication of the existence of an unnatural state of affairs. For normally the owner of the foot and the hand would have been leaning over the side of his precarious couch to hurl improper advice and offensive comment upon the players unsmilingly studying their dominoes beneath. No. Without a doubt something was very much amiss on the *Spiteful's* messdeck that evening.

Elsewhere about the mess men were reading, or painfully writing letters. With great concentration and much pursing of the lips a little ginger chap in an overall suit was carving the likeness of a very unclothed maiden from a piece of teak skilfully extracted that afternoon from the bosun's store.

A vast, red-bearded fellow grimly embroidered forget-me-nots upon a small white handkerchief. At the for'ard end of the messdeck a slight, sad-looking leading seaman, tinkering with the model engine which he had just completed, suddenly achieved a loud explosion and a cloud of steam. But even this did nothing to dispel the general gloom.

We do not have to look far for the reason. It was simply that, although it was Christmastide, the time of goodwill and rejoicing and the foregathering of families, the men of the *Spiteful* had not been granted leave; for the ship was under order to sail at some unspecified time within the next two days for service in the Mediterranean.

Now "going foreign" is rarely popular with your seasoned sailor, who infinitely prefers a waterfront pub on a rainy night in Britain, to all the blue seas and tropic nights and strange liquors that have ever been. In addition, in 1942, going to the Mediterranean was not even a little bit popular, as you yourself may well remember. Lastly, the idea of leaving at such a time of the year was popular least of all.

"It ain't the skipper's fault," said Able Seaman Wheelan. "He don't want to up 'ook and orf any more'n we do. He may be crazy but I see that photo of his missus in his cabin, and he ain't that crazy."

"It's the Admirality," said Ginger Williams significantly. To Ginger, the Admiralty was a vague but sinister force which existed for the sole purpose of plaguing and thwarting poor seamen.

"Christmas Eve, and yer can't even get ashore fer a pint o' wallop!" complained Bogey Knight bitterly. It was the culminating misfortune. All the men on the messdeck at that moment were of the starboard watch, the port watch having been granted shore leave until midnight. The port watch had gone off in a drifter soon after tea, offering to endure willingly all sorts of indignities at the

hands of their less fortunate shipmates if they came back less than blind drunk.

But there was one contented man in the ship, and that was the gunner. The gunner lay on his bunk in his cabin reading a goodish detective story, beside him a beautiful big gin which the wardroom steward had just brought in.

The gunner saw no immediate cause to be dissatisfied. He had no ties in the world, no desire to be anywhere other than where he was.

True, there was a lady friend in Glasgow, but long and varied experience in such matters had taught the gunner to be philosophical.

He settled down more comfortably with his book, happy in the knowledge that he would not be disturbed at least until the return of the revellers from shore. . . .

Out in the darkness and the rain Jock MacLeod's eyes narrowed as he stood in the middle of the *Firefly's* bridge and watched the shape of the ship ahead grow gradually more distinct.

At the same time, had it not been so dark, you might have seen a gleam come into those same eyes, for Jock was about to indulge in his favourite weakness, and he was happy in the peculiar way in which a man is happy when he is consciously giving way to a weakness.

Jock's weakness was a very human one. Accustomed to spend all his days judging niceties of speed and direction, to coming alongside ships without the slightest suspicion of a bump, to sneaking under towering bows and sterns with only the slightest fraction of an inch to spare, he found an empty river incredibly dull.

And to relieve this dullness he had formed the habit—a regrettable one, but harmless so far—of sliding past anchored ships far closer to them than was right and proper.

A TOUCH to starboard, a fraction back to port and the *Firefly* prepared to slide past the stern looming vaguely out of the darkness, close enough to shift the oil slick on her stern plates.

To the end of his days Jock never knew just what went wrong. . . .

When the men on the *Spiteful's* messdeck heard and felt the crash they looked at each other for a moment in tense surmise until they remembered they were not at sea but lying safe in the river.

"Glory be to God and they've busted something," exclaimed Able Seaman O'Ryan in delight.

"A week in dockyard 'ands me lads," roared the giant with the red beard.

"And Christmas with the wife an' kids, yet!" shouted Leading Seaman Perkins.

A collision in harbour, or in the safe waters of a river, is a dream which seldom comes true. It is the supreme gift of the gods. It offers a reasonable chance that some days will elapse before the ship is seaworthy again, a fair prospect of quiet, restful days safe from the violence of the enemy and the natural perils and hardships of the sea, and the seaman's conscience is easy because he has done nothing to contribute to the delay.

It is perhaps not a very heroic attitude, but your seaman never pretends to be a hero. No one works and fights and endures better than the British sailor when Providence commits him to the sea, but when Providence sends an errant tug to damage a propeller or spring half a dozen plates or so. . . .

In this instance the emissary of Providence, in the shape of a very red-faced and cursing Jock MacLeod, was now beating it into the night as fast as he could go. Through the darkness a roar of approval came to him from the *Spiteful's* quarterdeck, followed by a score of enthusiastic shouts for an encore.

The gunner learned of the collision by the simple process of being hurled from his bunk to the deck. He staggered up and made for the door. But the door would not open.

The efforts of Jock MacLeod had in fact achieved three things. The *Firefly* had struck the *Spiteful* on the starboard quarter, almost exactly at the bulkhead between the gunner's cabin and the adjoining spirit-locker. The door of the gunner's cabin had jammed, rendering him, the only officer aboard, a prisoner. The fastenings of the spirit-locker had sprung. In the locker the force of the impact had broached a keg of rum.

The real extent of the kindness of Providence to the lowlier ranks aboard *Spiteful* now began to be apparent. If the gunner was the only officer then in the ship, Thomas Waller was the only petty officer, and at the time of the

"I think I must be a boy, the nurse just kissed me"

collision Petty Officer Waller was asleep. And sleep being for Petty Officer Waller a kind of temporary death, he remained totally unaware of what had happened. Thus it was that a crowd of seamen and stokers gathered with lively interest upon the *Spiteful's* quarterdeck with no one of superior rank to direct their course.

Then, as they stood in animated discussion of the possible value of the collision to them, a sound of shouting and battering came to their ears.

"Down below," said a seaman, "wardroom flat!"

In a body they poured into the wardroom lobby and down the steel ladder to the deck below. The racket of noise increased every moment as they moved. When they reached the flat there was little doubt where it was coming from.

Leading Seaman Parker took unofficial charge. He knocked on the door of the gunner's cabin. His knock was instantly answered by a bellow which seemed to shake the ship.

"Open this door!" roared the imprisoned and infuriated gunner.

"Aye, aye, sir," shouted Leading Seaman Parker in reply. He tried the door handle. It would not move. He tried again, still without result. Then he exerted all his strength upon it. He could not budge it.

"It's jammed, sir!" he shouted.

There was an instant of silence, and then from within the cabin there came another mighty bellow.

Obediently, Leading Seaman Parker tried the door again. But at least one of the group around him had lost interest in the gunner's release, and that one was Able Seaman Brown. Buster Brown's wide, hairy nostrils twitched and he rubbed his hands on the white shirt he wore even in mid-winter. There was a sweet, heavy smell in the air, a smell familiar and much beloved by sailors.

Buster left the group in front of the door and walked further into the flat. The smell was heavier there. He looked about him, and saw the door of the spirit-locker ajar. With a look of incredulous hope dawning in his eyes he stepped inside, and there on the deck was a rum-keg, with the most precious liquid in the world oozing slowly from it.

Buster returned to the group before the door, walking rather like a man in a trance. He pushed his way through to Leading Seaman Parker who was still fiddling uncertainly with the door. Inside the cabin the gunner had lapsed into a disgusted silence.

Buster tapped Leading Seaman Parker on the shoulder.

"The spirit-locker's bust open," he said. "There's a keg of rum leaking."

Ginger Williams's eyes narrowed.

"That keg o' rum couldn't be safe," he said.

"You're telling me!" said Buster.

LEADING Seaman Parker's hand faltered on the handle of the door of the gunner's cabin.

"What's the matter with it?"

"It's been sprung. It's—leaking all over the deck!" Ginger's tone expressed the agony he felt at such waste.

"Ought to be given something to leak into, didn't it?" he added softly.

Leading Seaman Parker's eyes gleamed.

"We got plenty o' pails and things up for'ard," went on Ginger in honeyed tones.

"Can't let it leak on the deck," said Buster with a shudder.

A sudden gargantuan bellow from the cabin interrupted this momentous discussion.

"Aye, aye, sir—I'm doing me best," Leading Seaman Parker shouted back, and then added, in a lower tone—"All right, Ginge—go an' get a few pails."

A scene of extraordinary activity followed upon this decision. A miscellany of receptacles appeared in the wardroom flat as though by magic. The rum keg was hoisted to a rack and a pail placed beneath it.

For some reason it proved quite impossible to release the gunner, although a host of men attempted it in relays.

When the port watch came aboard that night those who were conscious were slightly surprised by the atmosphere on the seamen's messdeck. It was undeniably cheerful, even festive. There was a great deal of noise and laughter. A wonderful smell hung in the air.

Leading Seaman Parker was known as a resourceful man, but he never proved his resourcefulness so thoroughly as he did that night. Not only had he organized the watches at the gunner's door, but he had retained sufficient clarity of mind to remember that the coxswain was ashore and would be coming off later.

He realized that, regarding the messdeck's activities that evening, the coxswain, as senior rating in the ship and the link between officers and men, was a man who had to be kept quiet.

A little deputation met the coxswain at the gangway. Fortunately, he was fairly far gone. He seemed vaguely flattered at the attention he received. He was led gently for'ard and given a glass containing something which tasted remarkably like rum.

THE port watch had returned at ten-thirty. Just before eleven o'clock the quartermaster on watch came hurriedly for'ard.

"Captain's coming aboard!"

The words had a remarkably sobering effect. The speed with which the imprisoned gunner was released was amazing, as was the celerity with which the starboard watch got into their hammocks and were to all intents and purposes asleep.

But they were not allowed to stay in their hammocks long. As soon as the captain had reached the ship the gunner reported the evening's incident to him—as far as he knew it.

"All after compartments must be inspected at once," said the captain. "We are sailing at midnight—if we can."

The inspection was carried out immediately and with it all hopes of delay vanished. Some plates on *Spiteful's* starboard quarter had been dented, but her seaworthiness was in no way impaired.

Thus it was that at half-past eleven the mournful sound of the bosun's pipe was heard on the messdecks.

"Hands will be required at 23.45. Ship will proceed to sea forthwith."

H.M.S. *Spiteful* passed the boom at the mouth of the river, gliding from safety to danger, and began to lift to the swell outside. Before lay the immensities of the Atlantic and the perils that lurked there. On the bridge the captain bent to the voice pipe to order a change of course.

"Port fifteen. Steer two-seven-o."

"Aye, aye, sir!" In the wheelhouse the coxswain swayed a little on his feet as he spun the wheel.

On the bridge above the captain smiled to himself in the darkness. He bent to the voice pipe again.

"You're very cheerful tonight, coxswain!"

"Very cheerful—very cheerful indeed, sir!"

Then suddenly above the noises of the ship's progress there came a sound from down by the for'ard gun. Throaty, unmusical voices were raised in one of the unprintable ditties of the sea.

The captain listened for a while, and he would not have liked to confess to the emotions he felt. Then he turned to the first lieutenant.

"A damned fine body of men, Number One," he said.

FOOTBALL'S BIG-MONEY YEAR OPENS

by PAUL IRWIN

NEARLY TWO YEARS AFTER that fog-ridden day in November, 1945, when a shivering, suspicious herd of pale Russian footballers landed in Britain, the soccer lesson they taught us is making itself felt.

For the football promised to us in the season opening on Saturday will be Dynamo football, the sort of game that was once the close copyright of the British-bred player. It was the game we gave to the world—and then forgot. Five forwards up in attack, players running into the open spaces to pick up the pass, and the ball made to do most of the work.

Good, vintage football. Vintage '26, or, even before—the stuff which used to delight connoisseurs in the early days of the Corinthian amateurs.

Our football, especially English football, developed a craze for speed from 1925 onwards. Arsenal set the fashion. They won the First Division championship three years in succession with their snap raids and lightning switches from defence to attack. Never more dangerous than when play was around their own goal, they would alter the whole aspect of the game by a high-speed move that left the opposition floundering.

While Arsenal set the fashion, the late Herbert Chapman, then manager of the club, was the brain behind it all. He designed his plan to exploit the change in the offside law, converting his centre-half into a stay-at-home defender—a third back—and using a roving forward as link between attack and defence. Roly-poly Alex James, greatest inside forward of all time, was the key to the plan. He picked up loose passes and made openings with his split-second timing after opening the way to goal with one of his "mazy" dribbles.

Faster and Faster

What James did superlatively well, lesser footballers copied to the best of their ability. Speed and more speed was the demand. As it became part of the soccer set-up, the solid foundation of home soccer—the five-man forward line and along-the-floor passing—crumbled into disuse.

When the badly under-rated Dynamos showed us a brand of game that the veterans recognized instantly as authentically British, it set managers of the big League clubs thinking back to the better days of our football. Once on that track, many of them began to soften the accent on speed and return to older (and happier) methods.

Among those quick to make capital of the Dynamos' visit was Stanley Rous, secretary of the Football Association. Always a believer in the need to develop footcraft, as against sheer speed and the opportunist move, he preached the moral of the Russian lesson. Next thing, England's full international eleven was playing very much along old-fashioned lines—and reaping a rich dividend as a direct result.

There are some great copyists in sport. We can take it that the revived style, as shown by the English team, will soon become fashionable everywhere. It is a safe bet that it will be seen a lot this season—with results that will speak for themselves.

Equally significant for this season—but not so good—is the arrival of the £20,000 footballer. He is only just around the corner now that Derby County have paid £15,500 to Greenock Morton for Billy Steel, the Scottish international. The Steel transfer, made in the "close" season in face of fierce competition from other English League clubs, is the beginning of a mad scramble in the transfer market.

Crowds, Money, Pour In

There never was more money in the game. Crowds and cash were reaching record levels last winter—this, although the programme was upset by weather conditions and the League competition drawn out to wearisome length by the panic rush to cut down mid-week sport. Look at Stoke City. Their balance sheet shows a profit of £32,207, with gate takings at £76,978 gross. Astonishing figures, even though the Potteries club was a crowd-pulling magnet as it made a bid to beat Liverpool for the First Division championship.

They would have probably set an all-time record had the £11,000 cheque secured from Blackpool for the transfer of Stanley Matthews been included in the year's working.

This upward surge in transfers is one of the most spectacular things I have noted in a fairly long service of sports watching. Back in 1922, the best-ever fee was £5,000. Falkirk were the buyers from West Ham United. Seeking the services of Syd Puddefoot, the English international, they staggered the soccer world with the magnitude of their bid. "That's the limit," said the wiseacres. "No club will ever go higher."

Inside the year, Sunderland had topped the record by £200 when signing Warney Cresswell from South Shields, and by 1928 Arsenal were laying out £10,890 for David Jack, the brilliant Bolton and England forward. We had to wait another ten years for the figure to be beaten. Again it was Arsenal who did the trick—this time finding £14,000 for Bryn Jones, of Wolverhampton Wanderers.

The deal was carried through by Major Frank Buckley, master mind of the Wolves' player-factory. It set the seal on his genius for unloading talent at the best price, the Midlands club receiving £110,658 between 1935 and 1938 in transfer fees. In the same period, Major Buckley, now manager of Hull City, spent no more than £42,330 on replacement of the players he had sold.

So the transfer snowball rolls and grows larger each season. There were the huge fees paid last time for Alf Stubbins (Liverpool) and Len Shackleton (Newcastle United). Now comes the Derby capture of Steel, to be followed, I am sure, by the £20,000 deal.

It could have gone through in the last few weeks had Wilf Mannion, the cleverest inside forward now playing, held out for a transfer from Middlesbrough. The club needed Mannion more than the £20,000, and persuaded him that his future lay on Tees-side, where he was discovered playing in local football and signed without a fee. If the wander bug again bites the player—and he stays bitten—then expect him to become the first £20,000 footballer. He is worth every penny of it as values are assessed today.

Teams to Watch

Stoke City and the Wolves will be very close to First Division honours in the season ahead, although Wolves have the headache of finding a successor to Stanley Cullis, their brilliant centre-half, captain and tactician. Fighting it out with them again should be Liverpool, present champions, who have a blend of home-produced and ready-made stars, while Burnley, promoted from Division II, are the championship "long shots." Managed by Cliff Britton, ex-Everton and England, they have the finest defence in the land.

All the training is on the good old-fashioned idea of plenty of ball practice—this in direct opposition to the sprinting carried out in clubs where speed is wanted.

But it's a long way to May and the final "run in" for honours. If there is one safety-bet, then here it is—back Arsenal. With Tom Whittaker, who learned his job as trainer in the Chapman era, as manager in place of George Allison, the club may be starting out on a fresh phase of glory. Anything can happen. Yes, anything, including the double of Cup and League, once Whittaker gets right into his magnificent stride.

And now don't write to tell me I have an "Arsenal complex." I haven't. All I know is this: Arsenal, despite Chapman's insistence on speed, has done more for big-time football than any other club in the country. Arsenal is soccer's best advertisement and should stay prominently in the game's shop window—that is, round about the top of the championship table.

This football analysis is the first of three articles which Paul Irwin, the well-known sporting commentator, is writing specially for John Bull

A boatman takes his family with him on the barge. Snug? Isolation, physical discomfort, the children's education

JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPH BY KEMP

A JOB FOR WATER BABIES

by GEOFFREY WILLANS

The canal boatman is a romantic character. But if our waterways were developed, he could also become as essential a worker as the engine driver or the man at the wheel of a heavy lorry

DOWN AT THE WHARF they had almost finished loading. The barge had been neatly canvased and mopped, the canvas strings rolled; and the boat captain was looking at his watch.

In another five minutes he and his family would be off on their two-and-a-half day journey from London to Birmingham.

Take a look at this boat captain. He's a wiry, hard-bitten fellow in his blue overalls. His age is about fifty.

He and his family—wife, daughter and two sons—run their pair of barges up to Birmingham and back to London each week as regularly as clockwork, with a schedule arranged to give them a couple of half-days off and a visit to the pictures.

This boatman knows the whole stretch of canal between London and Birmingham backwards—every water hole, every lock, every mud bank. It's not so much an acquired as an instinctive knowledge. His grandfather was a boatman, and two donkeys pulled his long-bottomed wooden barge; two generations later the barge is steel, diesel driven, and less highly decorated. But the inborn knowledge which every boatman on the canals must have is there.

How long that knowledge will survive is doubtful, for the old family business of canal boatman is dying out—although there is good money in it.

A man working a barge and butty with his family can earn over £20 a week. An average figure is £15. Of course, if he has to pay a crew his profits are not so great, for the union minimum wage is £5. But for the family man with no overheads or rent, the pay is excellent.

Yet one of the biggest canal carrying companies, is running only seventy-five pairs of barges out of a hundred, because it cannot produce the crews.

Novice Passes By

You can find an answer to this problem of labour if you look into a typical case of a man who has come new to the canal.

He's young and he's learned a bit about boats in combined operations during the war. He thinks there's nothing to driving a barge along a flat, tideless bit of water.

"Look at him," said an old boatman. "He may learn in three years — he'll more likely take thirteen." He jerked a thumb at a passing barge. It wasn't "dressed" and the canvas strings were slovenly; the brasswork didn't gleam as it did on our own barge.

Our boatman (never call them bargees on canals) told me: "A canal isn't a flat-bottomed stretch. You've got to know the channel and where you're likely to get into trouble."

He told me, too, that if you went too fast through a waterhole (where the canal narrows under a bridge) the water would drain out and the barge sit down on the mud bottom for a couple of minutes.

But, apart from the tricks which knowledge can teach, there's no doubt there is a great deal in being brought up in a barge. The canal boatman and his family live in a couple of small cabins twelve feet long and seven feet wide; there's just about room for a stove, a bed and a bench. The table folds down; there's a small cupboard for food and crockery. You've got to be born on the water to be capable of living in such cramped conditions.

It is a life of little physical comfort and few amenities. For the greater part of the week, the only form of relaxation or entertainment is the wireless. It is a life in a world apart. Connections with shore life are tenuous, though news travels with amazing speed on the canal itself. Everybody on the "cut" knows what is happening. They know what boat girl is being courted by what young boatman. It is usual for boat families to intermarry.

The boat people wouldn't change their lives for any other; for the new men it isn't so easy.

Education is a big difficulty; unless the boatman puts his wife and family ashore there's no way of

getting over it. That explains why many of the older boat people cannot read.

Little wonder, perhaps, that a young man is not attracted to life on the water.

There are several solutions in the minds of the men who know the canals intimately. Better amenities will have to be provided: schools for canal children and, equally important, bath facilities like the miners'. It may be necessary to run canal barges as a train is run, keeping the barges moving continuously, with new crews taking over at different points of the journey.

Girl Who Volunteered

Canal companies say that it is only the old boating families who are really satisfactory. But there's the example of a girl who volunteered for work on the canals during the war; she has since married a man "from the shore," and the two of them are running their boats successfully.

And there is a man who bought a boat purely as a home. He had his cabin lengthened and made roomier. The news that he was a boat-owner reached the Ministry of Transport; a canal official interviewed him and told him of the commercial possibilities in buying a "butty" to tow twice the cargo for the same cost.

Starting very uncertainly, that man and his son are now enjoying the life they hankered for. They are making excellent money. And they have a home in return for a small capital outlay.

Behind the human problem lies another—the steady deterioration of the canals themselves. Before the war, such companies as the Grand Union were carrying up to two million tons of cargo a year. They realize that the country can make use of a go-ahead canal system. But they admit that they cannot offer such a system today.

During the war years their resources were overstrained—like those of the railways.

The neglect of seven years has built up a formidable deficit—lack of dredging, bank erosion and repairs to locks.

And that is only the back-log of the maintenance problems. To bring the canals to a real pitch of proficiency there must be new developments—the duplication of locks, elimination of bottlenecks, provision of lifts, to name only a few.

Nationalization an Answer?

The canal undertakings wonder whether the nationalization of transport will provide the answer to some of these problems. They need help if they are to do as good a job as they believe can be possible. In the meantime, they must justify themselves commercially.

At present much of their work, particularly the transport of food and coal supplies, is done under agreements with the Ministries. Unless nationalization comes quickly, there may develop a return to the old cut-throat competition for cargoes between the canal companies and the roads and railways, with the railways quoting flat rates with which the canals cannot at the moment compete.

Canal companies do not claim to provide as comprehensive a service as the railways, but they do claim to give a more straightforward service in handling freights direct from steamers at our ports.

Indeed, simplicity is the keynote. And with our fuel problems and deterioration of road and railway stock, the canals are a valuable ally of the two other main transport services. Tomorrow, with far-sighted planning, financial aid and modernization, they may regain the independent position of importance which they once held.

That is why the canal companies insist that it is in the national interest that this system of thousands of miles of waterways should be maintained.

First, because the canals offer an efficient though perhaps undeveloped means of transport which could take traffic off our already overcrowded roads. Second, because a co-ordinated canal system would relieve the railways' burden.

In fact, our canals, say the companies, can be developed so that they become as integral a part of Britain's transport system as the roads and railways.

P.S. ON THE "BLACK" BUILDER

Here is a Postscript to John Bull's campaign to beat black market building. The Government is to make a double move to check illicit construction

THERE IS GOOD NEWS for the home-seekers, good news for all who wish to see the houses go up and the families move in.

Soon two new steps to break the "black" builders' grip on construction and materials will be announced.

First. An inquiry is to be set up into the present-day working of every section of the building trade. Representatives of large building and industrial federations will be called in to recommend how existing causes of chaos and confusion can be removed.

Second. Plans are being made to regulate the distribution of all essential materials—bricks, timber, cement, steel, fittings, girders, cables, conduits—on a system which will replace the present unsatisfactory and haphazard "priority" scheme.

Nine months have passed since JOHN BULL announced its ten-point plan—outlined by William J. Gage—to beat the black market in building. Four points of this plan were shortly afterwards adopted by the authorities.

Local bodies were given power to prosecute "black" builders directly. Licences to "straight" builders were issued more freely and swiftly. Magistrates were urged to inflict heavier penalties on convicted offenders. More investigators were put to work on urgent and outstanding cases.

Last month Aneurin Bevan appointed two independent committees to consider housing costs and the difficulties caused by the widely-ranging prices and unfair distribution of building materials. Now come the latest moves.

Thorough Probe

Names of men for the inquiry are now being considered. They will represent both employers and workers and are to investigate the entire routine of the industry—costs, contracts, sub-contracts and their allocation, and methods of obtaining "priority" materials.

They will find many ready-made subjects for investigation. There are today more than 170,000 registered builders. A large number of these are bogus or one-man concerns which came into existence merely to cash in on "black" building.

Within six months of the end of the war, 35,000 new building firms were registered.

JOHN BULL'S recommendations on the distribution of essential materials have found a practical response. At present, under a Government "priority" scheme, essential materials are doled out on a kind of unchecked points system. In future the country will be divided into zones. Essential materials available will be regulated by zonal officers who must supply local authorities in proportion to their needs.

Fair Distribution

The system by which local authorities allow builders certain quantities of materials on the unsatisfactory W.B.A. form will be discontinued. Instead the local council will have to account for materials supplied to its own depots (which will be specially opened) and will be obliged to make sure that such materials are issued fairly to builders engaged on the most essential work.

The new moves are welcome—but there are other ways in which the campaign against the "black" builder can be pressed home.

The Government might consider the problems of building operatives who often find themselves working on essential jobs miles away from their homes. These men complain that they are unable to get hot meals—they may be a long distance from the nearest canteen or cafe—and on these sites sanitation often does not exist at all. As a contrast, men on black market jobs usually work indoors and are handsomely treated by employers.

And the building trade hopes the Government will make sure that officials, whether at headquarters or in regional zones, are experienced men who know their job. Far too many technical engineers and clerks today occupy important posts that could be better filled by men with practical building experience.

Above all, it is hoped that, whatever new decisions are made or regulations issued, statutory backing will be given to the men who do the actual control and administration. The "black" builder must be shown that officials have the power to expose him to heavy punishment.

The black market, in building as in all its branches, is a place where quick detection and tough punishment is the only sort of action that is respected and feared.

Gordon Beckles (on the Holiday Trail) goes—

BESIDE THE SEASIDE, BESIDE THE SEA

For most of us the beach is a favourite playground. And that's why for some, at this time of year, the beach is business

A FEW DAYS AGO I WENT ALONG to see a couple of those beaches on which Mr. Churchill promised we should fight if necessary in 1940.

We didn't, then; but there is a fight on now; it's a fight for your money.

And there has always been potential money in our beaches. For centuries the Crown has owned the area between high and low water mark—and you have no right to take away shells, seaweed or sand. The Crown can take the wreckage and anything else it chooses.

Strange things are these beaches of Britain!

It's as if all the millions who flock to them were trying to escape from the little island which is our home; I suppose it's a natural expression of a maritime nation's urge to get to sea; we get as near the water as we possibly can, then into the water, and finally on to the water.

And nowadays you can get on to the water in a variety of ways to suit every pocketbook.

I'll choose one beach which seemed to me most like a hundred others around the coast this August. You know this scene well: father trying to get to sleep in a deckchair; mother saying: "Stop it, now!" every few minutes; an elderly man, with his boots tied around his neck, paddling. And lots of people twisting themselves into knots trying to undress respectably.

Then out there, across the bay, there is a great flash of white water as a speedboat tears round the end of the quay, skids sideways and comes to rest.

Customers Crave Speed

The speedboat has been an easy winner this summer in the fight to get your money.

There was a queue for the speedboat. It held nine passengers. I paid my four shillings and clambered aboard. Presently we got the "off" signal, the captain started the two engines, and we dashed away in a cloud of spray—£1 16s. 0d. worth of us. I looked at the time; it was 2.42 p.m.

Speedboats give passengers and spectators alike the impression of terrific speed. We were, in fact, only travelling about twenty-five miles an hour, but by skidding around and throwing up the spray most of us got the impression that we were assisting Sir Malcolm Campbell to win the world speed record.

Feeling vaguely heroic, we came dashing back to the quay. The time was now exactly 2.47 p.m. Every ten minutes this speedboat set off on its trip. Six times an hour, nearly always full. At week-ends it was working an eight-hour day. You can work out the takings—£80 a day at capacity.

Then there are the pleasure steamers. All round the coast of Britain, and up some of its rivers, the pleasure steamers are returning from war service. From Dunkirk onwards these stout seagoing craft had a wonderful record, as they did in the first World War.

Presently, with a warning blast from her siren (slightly more shattering than the *Queen Mary's*), our pleasure steamer hove round the end of the point.

"A fine ship," said an old salt.

"What is she?" I asked. "motor ship or oil-burning?"

"Bless you!" he said. "They don't run on things like that. They run on bottled beer! Unless she has her sixty dozen bottled beers on board the captain hardly thinks it worth while to put to sea. Not safe, if you understand."

"Father snoozes, mother scolds. . . . People twist into knots to undress respectably"

I had a look at the fares. Here, considering the rising cost of travel, is the bargain of the summer of 1947. You could go sixty miles, and back again, on a ten-hour trip, for fourteen shillings ("Weather and Circumstances Permitting").

People were streaming from all over the beach now for a five shillings afternoon cruise. The bar is open all afternoon.

She was a fine vessel of slightly over 2,000 tons, and carried a crew of sixty—most of whom seemed to be connected with the serving of the bottled beer.

When the time came for her to sail, the ship had just over three hundred people on board, which would bring her owners £75. The trip was going to last just short of three hours and was one of two trips that day. She can sail for these short cruises with as much as £250 worth of passengers. And, besides, there is the profit on the bottled beer.

"Skylark" By Another Name

I went back to the beach.

The tide was coming in now, as per twice-daily schedule. There is money on these beaches, too, for the local corporations. There are the chairs, and ten per cent raked off from the owners of the *Skylark* and *Saucy Sue*.

There are still actual *Skylarks* sailing off the beaches, but nowadays it is the fashion to call them the *Montgomery* or the *Dunkirk Belle* or the *D-Day*.

I listened to the patter of the captain of a five-ton fishing craft which had the finest array of flags hoisted.

"We're going now . . . now we're off . . . only a minute now . . . any more, now? . . . Please hurry along . . . we're going now."

He said trade was bad. Worse than last year. He blamed it on the speedboats and said that he would be glad to get back to fishing when the summer was over, fishing in this same boat for sole, plaice and hake—"Glad, even though we see the sole that we sell for £1 a stone re-sold a minute later for £3 a stone."

The charge here was 2s. for a twenty-minute sail across the bay, but somehow it seemed to offer more romance, from the moment the little craft was pushed out into the foaming surf until the moment she grounded again with a rush against the shingle.

"We're going NOW!" said the captain, who looked a little like Gregory Peck.

"The Season" Disappoints

A girl in red beach trousers sidled up.

"Do you go yourself?" she asked. Perhaps she, too, had noticed the resemblance to Mr. Gregory Peck. He nodded, then took her around the waist and hoisted her aboard. The little fishing craft only had 10s. worth of passengers on board. And he would have to pay 1s. back to the corporation.

Along the coast I had been to another kind of beach.

This was the less commercialized beach, where it seemed no one had troubled to remove the gaunt iron-tube skeletons designed to keep Hitler's hordes out in 1940, and where signs of war are always present and it is unsafe to venture into the poppy-red fields for fear of barbed wire, and worse.

Up in the town they were saying what I had heard said at other resorts; that when the balance comes to be struck the seaside season will prove to have been a disappointment.

"The rivalry of the holiday camps?" I suggested.

"No. It's the five-day week. People seem to have found so much leisure time on their hands and to have discovered that leisure can cost money. So when the idea of a big week's or fortnight's holiday comes along they find their budget is all wrong. They fall back on one-day trips to the seaside."

Well, the cult of the beach has always been a fickle affair.

Perhaps, I thought, by 1957 I may be sitting on this very beach and hear the old call: "Any more for the *Skylark?*" and a great flying boat will whisk me off for a cruise to a foreign country.

FREE SPEECH

A miner complains that output is lost and family life disrupted—just for lack of alarm clocks

FOR FIVE YEARS I have not had an alarm clock—they are unobtainable. So when I go to the pit at 2 a.m., my wife must sit up to wake me. If I go on at 5 a.m., I get up at 2 a.m., so that she can get some sleep.

Thousands of shifts are lost each year through "sleeping in," and unfortunate miners who lose a shift, plus the attendance bonus—equal to another shift—are dubbed "malingerers" by many.

Sitting-up causes lowered vitality in both man and wife, poorer results in the pit and perhaps eventually a crack-up and time lost.

An ex-Serviceman who lost a shift three weeks ago told me his wife and daughter normally did two hours' guard duty watching the clock. But that particular night the daughter slept at her post.

I know of many men who lose work through not having an alarm clock—yet shops are full of expensive electric clocks which, in any case, use up fuel.

Let the Ministries concerned get together and save man-shifts, home difficulties and the shame of good working men being classified with the small group of "no goods" by putting the alarm clock within the miner's reach.—P. STEPHENSON, 602 Plessey Road, Blythe, Northumberland.

Grumblers Who Want to Quit

ONE IS SICK AND TIRED of hearing ex-Servicemen say: "If only I could get back to Durban and *live*. What a time I had there!" Or they make a similar remark about some other overseas place to which the war took them.

Men who make such comments are fed-up with England because they are back on the old humdrum job and are no longer fêted wherever they go. But if they had to work in those "dreamlands" in unglamorous postwar conditions, they would probably get just as fed up there as here.—E. DAVEY, 11 Kestral Grove, Hive Road, Bushey Heath, Herts.

Freedom—to be Promiscuous?

I HAVE IN MY POSSESSION a request from a German p.o.w. camp medical officer stating that, "in view of the raising of the ban on fraternization," Germans now require supplies of emergency treatment packets (Army preventive measure against the spreading of V.D.).

Readers will draw their own conclusions. If German prisoners are to be allowed this sort of freedom (whether V.D. is involved or not) it would be best for everybody concerned if they were deported with the least possible delay.—SERGEANT, R.A.M.C. (Name and unit address enclosed.)

End this Cruel (and Wasteful) Farce

WHEREVER FOXES ABOUND in Britain there is an understanding between fox-hunters and farmers. The farmers undertake to allow foxes to breed undeterred and the hunt committees promise to pay compensation for poultry destroyed by foxes.

Farmers could and would humanely kill more foxes in a week than are accounted for in a whole hunting season, but fox-hunters are, unfortunately, also the farmers' landlords.

So thousands of birds and countless eggs are written off annually in order that fox-hunters may have their fun.

Ignoring the disgraceful spectacle of a fox being torn to death, are there not grounds for the abolition of fox-hunting under the wastage of food laws?—J. E. RAINE, 64 Flowerhill, Airdrie, Lanarkshire.

BIRTH ON THE SCREEN AND FUTURE MOTHERS

Should the factual film, *Birth of a Baby*, be shown to the general public? Many readers' letters on this subject continue to reach JOHN BULL. Here is a selection:

THE FILM, *Birth of a Baby*, should be re-done in present-day dress. Knowledge banishes fear, and fear is behind many of the worries of uninformed expectant mothers.—MILDRED E. THACKRAY, 10 Belvedere Terrace, Leeds.

AS A GIRL OF TWENTY who hopes one day to marry and have a family, I saw the film with two friends of my own age, and we all came away feeling very pleased we had seen it.

Sex and childbirth aren't things to be shrouded in mystery. They are good, clean things which form the basis of happy marriage and should be treated as such.—MISS J. B. P., Edinburgh 6. (Name and address enclosed.)

I AM A TWENTY-YEAR-OLD member of the British Red Cross Society. I witnessed the actual birth of my niece a week ago—an experience I would not have missed.

If more young people saw the film, childbirth would not hold any fear for girls.—MISS I. V. H., Portsmouth. (Name and address enclosed.)

WE at school learn about births. Why shouldn't adults know more than we?

I send you this sheet of paper from my school exercise book. — A. HAMMOND (14), Chatham, Kent.

∴ The sheet of paper from Master Hammond's exercise book bears a pencil drawing, apparently done as part of a lesson, of "a human embryo." The drawing shows the unborn baby in position, with marginal notes indicating its relation to other parts of the mother's body.

OUR SWOLLEN-HEADED FILM MAKERS ● DOLLARS TO HOLLYWOOD ● MEN AT FRONT DOORS ● TIPPING

IT SEEMS A FEW SUCCESSES have gone to the head of the British film industry. They imagine they have the American producers in a sweat.

I agree that in straight drama the British can hold their own, but what about musicals, comedies, and juvenile stars?

It is false to state that the majority of Hollywood films are trash, and any talk of excluding American films from this country is foolish. We need them—just as the Services needed them during the war—to help us forget our troubles for a little while.—F. H. DIXON, 30 Cleverly Estate, London, W.12.

Two-Week Runs

ONE OF YOUR READERS suggests cinemas should economize by running American films for two weeks instead of one (JOHN BULL, August 9).

May I point out that, after deducting entertainment tax, a cinema pays a certain percentage of its takings (as high as fifty per cent for a first run in a big town) to the company producing or distributing the film.

Hence, to retain an American film for two weeks instead of one would merely be sending double the money across the Atlantic.

Patronizing our excellent British films will do far more to cut down our dollar expenditure than lengthening the run of *Duel in the Sun* or *The Outlaw*.—EVALINE BLOOMFIELD, 46 Gresham Road, Staines, Middlesex.

"Good Morning, Lady . . ."

THE WAR DID ONE GOOD THING for the busy housewife. The door-to-door hawker completely vanished. Now this racket is starting again.

I do not refer to the salesman who makes a call about every six months and

whose goods we know are genuine, but to the pests who usually tour a road three or four together. And the country needs labour!—MRS. F. HILL, 115 Cranbrook Road, Handsworth, Birmingham.

". . . Not Today, Thank You"

THE OTHER MORNING I was bathing the baby when someone hammered at the door. Thinking it might be something important, I sighed, rolled the baby in a towel, and went to find out who it was. When I opened the door, a man of about forty asked: "Is anyone here interested in football pools?"

What is the good of telling us that the country is on the verge of ruin or urging us to "work or want" when able men are wasting their own and other people's time in such a useless way?

It certainly made me wonder why *I* keep slaving from morn till night, trying to fit in all my numberless jobs till I reach the point of exhaustion.—MRS. P. M. EVERITT, Ferndale, Ardleigh, Essex.

Under-the-Plate

ON THE QUESTION of tipping, discussed by Gordon Beckles in the "Holiday Trail" series (JOHN BULL, August 16), there will always be some people who want to tip — and low wages result from tipping, not tipping from low wages.

Most people who tip do so either because they feel they are giving something "extra in recognition of personal service," or just because it's "the custom."

I have never met anyone who tipped because he thought the staff were underpaid by their employers. Whatever wages are paid, tips will still be offered by some people and it takes a strong will to resist taking money, especially when a customer may feel offended as a result. The only way to right this situation is to forbid tipping by law. Then employers will have to increase wages—or else lose their staffs to other industries.—S. S. HARRIS, 4 Eighth Avenue, London, E.12.

On Guard—at Seventy

EVERY WEEK WE READ of some warehouse being broken into, the night watchman being bound and gagged, and goods worth thousands of pounds being stolen.

In nearly every case the age of the watchman is given as between sixty and seventy.

If the owners of the warehouses were to pay a decent wage and employ, say, a couple of young, tough six-footers plus some trained dogs, more goods would be sold in the shops and fewer in the black market. — E. G. PERKS, 1 Crossfield House, Blaenavon, Mon.

A Scholar's Call-Up

GENERAL STANDARD OF education in this country is steadily rising, and certainly a high standard is essential to obtain a good job.

Last year I passed the Oxford School Certificate, obtaining a "credit" in every one of the eight subjects I attempted. I naturally intended to make the Oxford Higher School Certificate my next goal.

Now, after completing one year of the

with my feet up

by Ian Fox

Darby and Joan

"DO YOU REMEMBER, Mary old dear, way back in 1947, when that scientist said that life might be prolonged to 112 we didn't believe him?"

"Yes, Tom."

"And tomorrow is my 113th birthday, Mary."

"And next month we shall have been married for ninety years, Tom."

"We're great-great-great-grandparents now."

"Yes. You know, I really think we shall have to stop giving birthday presents to all our grandchildren. After all, there are 253 of them."

★ ★ ★

"Perhaps I might still send Willie five shillings."

"You always did spoil him because he was our first-born. I expect he'll only spend it in riotous living."

"I tell you the boy's old enough to look after himself. You forget he's nearly eighty-nine."

"And has about as much sense as you had at that age, Tom."

"There's no need to be insulting."

"There you go—dropping your cigarette ash on the carpet again. I've spent ninety years of my life trying to stop you dropping cigarette ash on the carpet. You men are all alike. No consideration. . . ."

"And you women are all alike. Nag, nag, nag."

★ ★ ★

"How could you! I never nag. Of course, if you *want* to leave me . . . Tom! I see it all now. You've been meeting that blonde again."

"Which blonde?"

"You know which blonde. That Amelia Wigglesmith."

"But, Mary, that happened sixty-three years ago."

"Ha, a nice excuse! Carrying on behind my back with a young hussy of ninety-three. Here am I slaving my fingers to the bone to keep a nice home. . . . All right, throw me out. Cast me aside like a sucked orange. . . . And stop reading a newspaper when I'm talking to you."

"Good heavens! Look at this terrible news! A scientist predicts that we shall all live to be two hundred."

FREE SPEECH

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

two years' course, I find that since I am nineteen days too old I cannot obtain deferment from the Forces to complete the course and my school career must end.

I have appealed before the Hardship Committee who say they can do nothing as I have no grounds for deferment.

What is the use of such a committee if all it can do is to sympathize?—PHILIP CLUTTERBUCK, Acton Turville, nr. Badminton, Glos.

Education, False God

JUVENILE LABOUR is now severely frowned upon. Even the delivery of newspapers is banned for children under thirteen.

What is the object? More leisure for boys and girls of school age? That would be splendid. But in fact the worship of education, that false god, is the reason. The children's education must not be hampered.

Nobody wants little boys sweeping chimneys, as in Victorian times, but this present-day concentration on mental activity is dangerous. The mind is even more delicate than the body and should not be overworked.

How often does one hear of an open-air worker finding life intolerable? Suicide is too common among the educated.—MISS GERTRUDE THOMPSON, 102 The Grove, Winton, Bournemouth, Hants.

Half Fares, Please

NOW THAT THE school-leaving age has been raised, surely the transport companies should allow children up to fifteen to travel half-price.

The half-price scheme was originally introduced so that parents need not pay full fares for children unable to earn their own living.

As a schoolboy, I feel some alteration should be made.—S. K. GROVE, Westmeston Place, Westmeston, Ditchling, Sussex.

Holiday Playgrounds

WHY NOT OPEN school playing fields during the holidays to give children a place to play in, to reduce road accidents and to set many mothers' minds at rest?—A. W. PEARCE, 77 Willclare Road, Birmingham.

Enemies into Friends

USING ONE'S LEISURE to rediscover old friends (JOHN BULL, August 2) is stimulating. Since February I've gone a step further and contacted "old enemies."

I've made a marvellous discovery and it's this. The sweets and chocolates I've enjoyed most were those I sent to the children of these old enemies in the zones of Germany.

No football pool fan, no racetrack punter, ever had such a thrill as I the day I penetrated the "Iron Curtain"—with a bar of chocolate! — M. B. ERSKINE, Davaar Kirn, Dunoon, Scotland.

Lightening Our Drabness

TO BRIGHTEN UP our dull, drab streets, we should follow the example of Holland. Many houses there are painted cream all over and hosed down every morning.

To walk down streets of brightly painted houses and shops would cheer up queue-weary housewives like myself—and our menfolk, too.—B. M. EDWARDS, 57 Frogmore Avenue, Hayes, Middlesex.

M.P. (Ret.)

COULD WE NOT HAVE an upper age limit for M.P.s? On reaching middle age, men almost invariably tend to lose either their ideals or their vigour, or both.

And that is the main thing that's the matter with our parliamentary system today.

I would suggest that all M.P.s should have to retire either on reaching the age of fifty, or after they have been in the House for twenty years, whichever comes first.

Many of our Ministers have breathed the air of Westminster—"the best club in England"—for so long, that they have absorbed its traditional atmosphere. Whereas they were elected to build a new England, not to buttress the old.—J. S. N. FOSTER, Mitchell Avenue, Jesmond, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Yesterday's Paper

SINCE NEWSPRINT has been cut again, the salvage of paper is of paramount importance.

People buying newspapers, or having them delivered, should be made to give up an old copy in exchange for the new one? This would ensure supply.

I have seen stacks of newspapers burned simply because there was no one to collect them for salvage.—M. IRWIN, Meo Voto, Hill Road, Portchester, Hants.

Hair-Raising

ONCE AGAIN AN ANNOUNCEMENT of an increase in the charge of haircutting has appeared in our local newspaper—this time an increase of 25 per cent, making a total increase of 150 per cent over the prewar cost.

Certainly the cost of living has gone up, but what does a hairdresser use that justifies a demand for a 25 per cent increase in charges over those of a year ago?

Surely the time has arrived when such increases—which aggravate the "vicious spiral" trend—should be subject to thorough investigation and only granted where circumstances really warrant them. —"BOBBED," Royton, Lancs. (Name and address enclosed.)

Looking After the Pennies

FOR TWELVE MONTHS I have tried to obtain a Post Office home safe—in which to put the odd bob or two each week.

At six post offices I have been told that none is available yet.

Surely if we are constantly being asked to save, these handy home safes should be made available to all.

No one likes to queue in a post office to deposit a trifling sum. And the pennies (which would mount to pounds) are frittered away.—P. N. KERNOT, 33 Nebo Street, Liverpool 15.

★ LETTERS *intended for this feature should be marked "Free Speech." One guinea will be paid for every reader's letter or extract published. Full name and address of the sender must be given (preferably, though not necessarily, for publication). Please keep letters brief.*

THIS WEEK'S COVER

"HAVING played most games, I don't feel bound to continue all my life wasting time on them," Douglas L. Mays announced. Then he went to the seaside and, as if deliberately spiting his own views, painted this bright cover, "Beach Cricket." A gruff cynic, contemptuous of silly human loves and pastimes, Mays is prevented from becoming a recluse by his four boisterous daughters.

JOHN BULL

QUIZ

RELIGIONS

(1) How did the Quakers get that name? (2) What was the name of the *Buddha*? (3) What religion was founded by Lao-Tsze? (4) What did the 1662 Act of Uniformity require of all ministers? (5) Can one be both an atheist and an agnostic?

IMPOSSIBILITIES

Why are these impossible: (1) For Pearl Diver to win next year's Derby? (2) To shoot a Scotch woodcock? (3) To have caught Dick Turpin on his ride to York? (4) For cars to smash at Brooklands while racing this summer? (5) For an irresistible force to meet an immovable object?

ISMS

(1) What is chauvinism? (2) What is the main cleavage between socialism and capitalism? (3) The Soviet regime is violently opposed by a rival group outside Russia standing for a more radical form of communism: its creed? (4) What do protectionists want to protect, and how? (5) How did fascism get its name?

OLD MEN

(1) Which French writer finished his tragedy *Irene* at the age of eighty-four? (2) Who was Prime Minister of Britain at eighty-five? (3) What is the title of George Bernard Shaw's last play so far, published when he was eighty-three? (4) Who composed the opera *Falstaff* at eighty? (5) Which painter-sculptor-poet became architect of St. Peter's, Rome, when over seventy?

BIRDS

(1) Which of these birds stay in Britain all the year: Cuckoo, golden eagle, kingfisher, swallow, sparrow? (2) A sparrow in normal flight makes three, thirteen, twenty-three, thirty-three wing-strokes per second? (3) What is a Bird of Paradise? (4) Why may your canary not hear when you speak to it? (5) We are told that a roc carried off Sinbad the Sailor—is there such a bird?

(*Answers on page 22*)

THE BIG GRUNT

Everybody laughed until he let loose his almighty wallop. Oh dear me, *what* a wallop!

by LESLIE HALWARD

ILLUSTRATED BY YATES WILSON

Exposure of the "killer's" weakness forced his manager to think fast, and the brainwave, when it came, was a knockout

DID I EVER TELL YOU about the heavyweight I managed, a good many years ago, when I first started in the business?

He was called Big Olsen. He was no more a Swede than I am, but he looked like one. He was blond and blue-eyed and fair-skinned, and stood six feet three in his socks and weighed just under nineteen stone.

When you saw Big Olsen you imagined him felling trees in a Swedish forest, living on deer and goat's milk in the log cabin he'd built with his own massive hands. That was the idea, of course. He looked romantic. And I had to think of a more romantic name for him then "Sissle 'Igginbottom." He hailed from Dudley.

Big Olsen was an amazing performer in the ring. He couldn't *box* chocolates, but, oh, dear me, how that fellow could hit! He never hit until the other fellow really hurt him. Then you'd hear Big Olsen grunt. He grunted like a bear. And when Big Olsen grunted, like a bear, because he was hurt and angry, you could safely assume that the fight was over. Because less than a second after you'd heard that grunt, the other fellow would be lying flat on his back, utterly disinterested in the fact that the referee was slowly counting from one to ten.

Big Olsen always declared afterwards that he'd never *meant* to hit the fellow as hard as that, but when he was hurt something came over him and he honestly didn't know what he was doing. I repeatedly assured him that whether he knew what he was doing or not didn't matter as long as he kept on doing it.

I first saw Big Olsen do his extraordinary act as a bill-filler in a Midland hall. He was introduced as Joe Smith. Everybody gasped with admiration as he stepped into the ring, for he really was a magnificent figure. Everybody roared with amusement and derision when they saw the way he shaped, for he wasn't much more gainly than the bear he grunted like when, in the middle of the fourth round, he got hurt. I was just as much amused as the rest.

But we all stopped our laughing and sneering when the big fellow let loose that almight wallop. Oh dear me, *what* a wallop! I should imagine that his opponent wasn't able to laugh for at least a week after. Not that the recollection of what happened that evening would make him want to laugh.

Anyhow, I'd just started up in this business of managing boxers, and I was on the look-out for one who'd be likely to attract a crowd. And it seemed to me that this big gommack might easily be the very fellow I was looking for with his superb physique and his murderous punch.

There's nothing the fight fans like better than to see one of the participants in a bout of fisticuffs sail from one side of the ring to the other, land with a sickening thud on the canvas, and lie there for ten seconds like a wet rag doll. They'd just seen it, and every man jack was jumping up and down and howling his immense delight.

I WAS IN the dressing-room, talking earnestly to this man-slaughtering Apollo, before the gloves were off his hands. It didn't take me the length of a count to realize that he was as innocent, as guileless as a little babe. His big blue eyes grew as round as a female film star's when I told him that I was a manager and that I'd deem it an honour if he'd allow me to arrange his career for him. It took him about a minute to regain the power of speech. Then, after gulping three or four times, he managed to say:

"Well, Ah do' know abaht that, Mr. er, Mr. ——."

"Gardener's the name," I told him. "Sam Gardener."

"Marn's 'Igginbottom, really," he said. "Sissle. Sissle 'Igginbottom."

"Well, Sissle," I said, with an involuntary shudder, "you must know that if you're going to get on in the fight business you've got to have a manager. I'm up here on a talent search, and I've just seen what you did to that unfortunate fellow they put into the ring with you. It at once occurred to me that if you and I got together a fair amount of financial profit and national acclaim might come of the union."

"Yo' really think so, Mr. Gardener?" he asked incredulously.

"Nothing more certain," I assured him.

He nodded ponderously.

After he'd drawn a quid for legally almost killing a decent, law-abiding citizen, the pair of us went out and had some food in a restaurant, and Sissle told me all about himself. He was an orphan and, as far as he knew, had no living relatives. He'd lived in Dudley with his grandparents since he was knee-high, but they'd both been dead for years, and from the time he was seventeen he'd been in lodgings and working at a foundry in Birmingham. He didn't like the work, and he didn't like Birmingham. He

wanted to do something, and live somewhere, better.

"So you made up your mind to become a boxer?"

He nodded. But only a week or so ago, it seemed, on a sort of impulse. That night he'd made his first public appearance in a ring. He'd called himself Joe Smith in order to conceal his real identity, and had told nobody of his intention.

"Then," I cried, excitedly, "only the small crowd who were in that hall tonight know that you've ever been inside a ring, and *they're* still under the impression that your name's Joe Smith! Is that right?"

"That's raht, Mr. Gardener," he said, clearly wondering what I was driving at.

My mind was working rapidly. "Listen Sissle," I said. "You aren't going to be Sissle 'Igginbottom any more. You're going to be Carl—Carl—Carl Olsen. No, not *Carl* Olsen. That don't sound right, somehow. You're going to be——. Let me think. You're going to be ——. I've got it! You're going to be *Big* Olsen. You're going to be Big Olsen, the great Swedish discovery, and you're coming to London with me, and we're going to have a lot of people putting their hands into their pockets for the price of admission to see you perform your act!"

Well, that's how I came to be the manager of the Swedish heavyweight, Big Olsen.

I knew that it was no use expecting him to get *very* far, but I did expect to make a nice bit of cash out of him while the going was good. So I kept him fighting second- and third-raters, and he never failed to put his opponent to sleep.

Some time during the fight—it might be in the first round or it might be in the last—the other fellow would make the mistake of hitting out really hard and causing Big Olsen to grunt. In all probability he actually heard that grunt, but it's quite certain that he didn't hear anything else until a considerable time had passed, and that the first sounds that reached his ears were rather muffled and seemed to come from a long way off.

To cut a long story short, within a couple of years of my bringing Big Olsen to town he and his grunt were being talked and written about quite a lot, in the columns where third-rate fighters were noticed at all—one witty reporter had already christened him The Big Grunt—and I was beginning to wonder just how much longer I dare carry the thing on.

I didn't want Big Olsen's career to finish abruptly—I was on too good a thing for that—and I don't mind admitting that I worried myself considerably trying to estimate how much longer it could last.

As I've already said, around Blackfriars and such places Big Olsen was being talked and written about quite a lot. The thing that the reporters loved, of course, was the bear-like grunt that preceded the wallop that put an end to the fight. I'd given the boys plenty of dope concerning the big fellow's childhood and youth in the Swedish forests, but that had all been used up. Big Olsen was still winning fight after fight in a most sensational fashion, and the boys naturally wanted a new line.

They had noticed the peculiar expression on Big Olsen's face as he stood in the ring regarding his recumbent ex-opponent. Big Olsen kept on telling me that when he was hurt "something came over him and he honestly didn't know what he was doing." That explained the look of bewilderment and slight sorrow visible for a few moments from the ringside. It wasn't there for long—only until he realized that he'd merely flattened the fellow who was in the ring with him and that, therefore, there was nothing at all to worry about. But while it did last, it was very obvious that Big Olsen was puzzled about something.

And as this happened in every contest, it was only natural that the customers should start hankering after an explanation.

The story made quite a splash when it came out. At the right time, when I thought he could do with a boost, I'd told the reporter boys about how, just at the time when he emitted that grunt, something came over Big Olsen, a sort of blackout that might occur at any time during a fight, and that the next thing he knew was that his right hand hurt a bit and his opponent was lying stone cold at his feet. It was a good story, and those hawks certainly made the most of it. I reckoned they'd be satisfied for a while.

I was talking to a fellow one night in the Resin Club. I didn't know him, but apparently he knew me, and I suppose I was young enough in those days to feel flattered. Anyway, I'd had a few drinks and was almost praying for the company of a good listener. This fellow mentioned Big Olsen, and of course I was off like a horse at the starting gate.

Yes, I told him, that "black-out" was a very peculiar thing, a very peculiar thing indeed. Uncanny, really. Some fellows might feel a bit scared about having anything to do with a—a—peculiar person like Big Olsen. But really there was nothing to be scared of. Nothing at all.

"You see," I explained, "it only comes over him, as you might say, when he's been really hurt. Other times he's as harmless as a kitten. Wouldn't injure a fly. But when he gets hurt, *really* hurt——! You may have noticed yourself that it's always just after the other fellow's got in a really good punch that Big Olsen grunts. And when Big Olsen grunts"—I spread my hands like a spiv bargaining—"it's all over."

The fellow sat up as if he'd just been informed that he'd won a thousand pounds in a sixpenny sweepstake. "Do I understand you to say that Big Olsen never has one of these murderous blackouts *unless he's really hurt*?"

"That's right," I said.

"Thanks!" he cried. He leapt out of his chair and in another moment he was gone.

Thanks? I thought. What the devil has the fellow to *thank* me for? And then, as the awful thought shot into my booze-befuddled brain, I also leapt out of my chair and sped like a greyhound in the same direction.

But the fellow had got too much start on me. He was clear of the building, probably, before I'd reached the door of that room. I dashed back and made numerous hasty inquiries as to who he was. Nobody seemed to know anything about him. I feared the worst. I could only wait in agony until the following morning to find out whether I was right.

I was. There it was, on the sporting page of the *Daily Bugle*, the full story of the boxer who could win only if he was hurt sufficiently to make him lose his control. I dreaded to think what was going to happen the next time Big Olsen took part in a contest.

I told you that Big Olsen couldn't box to save his life. One night he was in the ring with a fellow who was grimly determined that he wasn't going to hurt him whatever happened. You can imagine what it was like. The crowd cat-called, applauded, shouted rude remarks, and finally succumbed to laughter. Talk about a fiasco! Big Olsen was lumbering about the ring like a lame ox, and the other fellow was prancing about like a fairy, tip-tapping his face and body as if he were using a feather tickler.

That, I thought, was the finish of Big Olsen. And then I had a brainwave.

It was quite obvious that the great gommack would never win another fight as long as he lived unless somebody really hurt him. It was equally obvious, now that everybody in the sporting world knew of his peculiarity, that nobody inside a ring with him was going to hurt him if he could possibly avoid it.

Well, then, if the fellow he was fighting wouldn't hurt him, *somebody else would have to!*

I got Big Olsen fixed up for another fight as soon as possible. Slim Doolan jumped at the chance, for he assumed that as far as he was concerned it was going to be money for old rope. All he had to do was pull his punches.

For three rounds I let the sorry affair go on. Then just as the timekeeper was about to hit the gong for the fourth I leaned over Big Olsen as if to offer a last-second word of advice. With a lightning movement I gripped his nose between my first and second fingers and gave it an almighty twist. A lesser structure would have come adrift.

With tears spurting from his eyes, Big Olsen leapt to his feet. I heard him grunt. I didn't hear anything else for some time. Then I heard the confused sound of several voices talking excitedly. In a semi-dazed condition, I was lying on the couch in Big Olsen's dressing-room. Big Olsen was leaning over me. There were tears in his eyes.

I shook my head, and gradually things fell into focus.

"What happened?" I inquired.

"Ah'm sorry, guv-nor," began Big Olsen.

I sighed deeply. My jaw ached as if a horse had kicked it.

"All that happened," said Slim Doolan, who had followed the rest into the dressing-room, "was this."

And he flattened Big Olsen with as lovely a smack as it's ever been my privilege to witness.

The outcome of it all? Big Olsen went back to the Birmingham foundry. I signed up Slim Doolan. You wouldn't expect me to let a fellow with a punch like that slip through my fingers, would you?

THE HUMAN MACHINE

by ROFFE THOMPSON

You're Unique, You Know!

I HAVE always believed it a good thing to think a lot of oneself. No one will ever get very far without doing so.

Self-confidence is the first essential for success in any walk of life. You can only do a job well if you *know* you can do it well.

Yet many of our sayings and admonitions seem designed to produce the opposite effect: and there are people who are unwilling to hand out the least praise for fear of encouraging an inflated sense of self-esteem.

Such people are fond of saying: "Don't think too much of yourself. Remember you're not the only pebble on the beach."

I think they're wrong. In your own corner you *are* the only pebble on the beach, and don't you ever forget it. Bear it constantly in mind and make sure you're a good pebble.

Mind you, this attitude to oneself carries with it obligations. Rank—even rank you give yourself—has responsibilities. And there is no excuse for adopting a superior attitude to others.

Nor is there any justification for self-complacency. Even if you do think you're good, even if you know you're good, you've still to prove it to people who haven't your own faith in yourself. And they will certainly continue to believe you're not the only pebble on the beach until you give them some very solid reasons for thinking otherwise.

Remember there's all the difference in the world between well-founded self-esteem and sheer egotism. If you value your reputation never allow the one to become the other.

OH, JOHNNY!

by TIM

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K16

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Talking Points About HORSES

THE HORSE WAS DOMESTICATED later than the ox or the ass, probably in the steppes of Central Asia before 2,000 B.C. Although fossils show that horses were among the earliest inhabitants of the American continent, they died out—and the natives of Mexico were terrified by the horse charges of the Spaniards under Cortez.

★ ★ ★

The British Isles lead the world in horse breeding, although the Russians claim that a breeding station in the Vladimir Province has produced equine giants ten times the strength of ordinary horses. Budenny, the cavalry general, has bred a new Red Army horse by crossing English thoroughbred Arabs with a strain from the Don Basin.

★ ★ ★

Queen Elizabeth kept a breeding stud and watched her horses race at Croydon in 1585.

★ ★ ★

All British racehorses are descended from three late eighteenth-century eastern horses, Byerley Turk, Darley Arabian, Godolphin Barb. The nineteenth-century unbeaten racehorse Eclipse, great grandson of Darley Arabian, sired 344 winners in twenty-three years. Total prize money: £158,047 12s.

★ ★ ★

The British Stud Book dates from 1781, the Racing Calendar from 1727.

★ ★ ★

Britain now uses Army horses for display only, but the Remount Depot at Melton Mowbray and the "Scare School" at Windsor (where imperturbability is taught) still follow traditional practices. The Life Guards have taken over a number of German Army horses.

★ ★ ★

Horses are good swimmers. One which bolted from a coal cart into the sea towed a boatload of rescuers round Peterhead Harbour, Aberdeen, for two hours. They also get seasick. A U.S. ship carrying U.N.R.R.A. horses to Poland recently S O S'd that 790 were affected. A vet sailed out from Dover to help.

★ ★ ★

Australia has a plague of wild horses called brumbies. They trample crops, spoil cattle pasture, and lure away valuable mares. Donkeys and camels roam with them.

★ ★ ★

Dartmoor lost forty-three ponies during the cold spell.

★ ★ ★

Diss, Norfolk, recently reported an epidemic of tail biting among local horses. The reason, said experts, was a lack of salt.

★ ★ ★

About 40,000 horses crowd London streets. They are the cheapest means of slow conveyance of heavy loads.

★ ★ ★

When Lord Northcliffe bought his first car, he pointed to a cabhorse and said: "We shall live to feed these things buns at the Zoo." But last Easter they were still going strong. Not a stone's throw from the Regent's Park Zoo the London Van Horse Society held their thirtieth annual show, attracting a big entry.

★ ★ ★

Love stories: A Yorkshire farm boy this year fired ricks worth £900 because his horse was sold. The Clones (Eire) Council had a problem horse which always struck work if its particular driver was ill or on holiday.

★ ★ ★

Long-life stories: Blossom, seventeen-year-old chestnut mare, has been retired to South Mimms to ramble at will after fourteen years with the Felixstowe Council. Old Tom has just died at Wrexham from a surfeit of mangolds. Age: fifty.

as I was saying.... by Herbert Hodge

WE'RE ALL OF A DITHER!

At the moment we're rather like an ants' nest that's been trodden on—all upset and confused. But ants always sort themselves out. So can we

I MAKE no apology for returning again this week to readers' letters about our present difficulties—because these personal stories light up so many points of contact in my own mind.

A feeling of individual frustration comes out in nearly every letter. Here's a little story of frustration from a housewife.

Her flat caught fire, under the fireplace. The fire brigade arrived in time to put it out before any great damage was done. A fireman told her the fireplace needed rebuilding.

She told the landlord. The landlord refused to spend the money necessary to have the fireplace made really safe, but agreed to have it patched up.

The builder's man came to do the job. She told him what the fireman had said. He agreed with the fireman's view, and felt he ought to tell his boss; then hesitated and finally decided to follow his instructions and merely patch it up.

"The fact is," he said, "it wouldn't be any use my saying anything. My boss is almost as big a rogue as your landlord."

☆ ☆ ☆

READING that letter, I could picture the scene—he and she together, pondering over that broken fireplace and making up their minds that poor and honest people such as they were quite helpless in a world of rogues.

It's one of those tragicomic stories in which the hero and heroine bow, all too soon, it seems to me, to what they feel to be fate. I don't know all the personal details, of course; but I can't help feeling that if they'd both made up their minds from the beginning *not* to accept that patched-up fireplace, they could have done far more about it than they did.

☆ ☆ ☆

A MAN'S story about himself, his friend, and their two motor bikes is, perhaps, more typical of our general frustration at the moment. One man is trying to make do with his prewar machine, but will have to wait fourteen weeks to get a two-hour job of welding done.

The other has turned in his old one for a new postwar model, but has already spent £30 in repairs. Question—which is the wiser man?

Well, I'm still running my fourteen-year-old car, because I can't afford a new one—even if I could get it. And my private information from friends in the trade is that, since I know my car to be in good condition, I'd be a fool to part with it, even for one of the latest models.

But I don't think this is a sign that the country's going to the dogs.

As I remember it, the motor trade was in quite as bad a state just after the last war; with plenty of easy money for the fakers and fiddlers, and with people paying tremendous prices for anything that looked, on the outside, like a possible conveyance.

☆ ☆ ☆

MUCH the same thing applied then, and applies now, to most trades. So far as all this is simply the aftermath of the worst war in our history, I don't think it's anything to despair about.

At the moment, we're rather like an ants' nest that someone has trodden upon—all upset, confused and thrown out of our customary ways. But we'll settle down and get going again—just as our blitzed towns did during the war.

The same sort of thing happens if you throw a pendulum out of its swing. After a time, it begins to swing evenly again. But we can help to regain our balance by the exercise of our own willpower. And that, as I see it, is what most thinking men and women in this country are trying to do today.

☆ ☆ ☆

GIVING, as I did in my first article on this subject, examples of sloppy work in the building and motor trades, I've naturally received a number of letters from men engaged in those trades—many containing practical advice, in case I want to do such jobs for myself.

One garage proprietor has done me the honour of pasting the article up on his garage wall, so that everybody can have the benefit. Which possibly explains a letter from a chap who signs himself "A producer and proud of it," telling me he can't understand why he and others pay threepence a week to have insults thrown at them by me.

He makes the point that there's far more good work being done than bad. And I think he's right. All I suggested was that the proportion of sloppy work has increased lately. And I said that as much in the spirit of self-criticism as in criticism of others.

I've never been able to feel I was one of those high-class literary gents, gazing down upon the follies of mankind from the top of an ivory tower. Having had to spend most of my life doing ordinary jobs, I can never feel I'm anything more than a working man who writes. My writing may be simply the outlet for my own frustrations — though the conscious intention behind it is to exchange ideas in the hope of helping us all.

All life, it seems to me, is a continual battle with frustration. Like wasps on a window pane, we keep frantically buzzing up and down in the effort to find a way through.

☆ ☆ ☆

BY the way, a frustrated wasp is well worth watching. I've never seen a wasp who threw up his hands in despair and blamed the Government.

At first, he behaves as though he's lost his temper—or perhaps he's in a panic. He batters himself against the transparent glass in a blind effort to break through. Then he falls, exhausted.

You might think him dead. But he isn't. He's quietly resting; getting his breath back—and, as I'm inclined to believe, thinking it over. For, if you watch him long enough, you'll see him, after perhaps two such blind bursts, and two spells of quiet thought, finally pull himself together and slowly and carefully crawl up the *frame* of the window until he finds an opening through which he can fly.

I've watched many a wasp do that. And I've often thought what a great deal more we human beings could do if we would similarly couple our powers of intelligence with our powers of perseverance.

It's been said often before, I know, but I still think it's the only way out of our material difficulties —if not of our spiritual ones, as well.

Herbert Hodge's wise and witty commentaries on life appear in John Bull every week

HOW to GET Debt Met—SWEAT!

HUNDREDS of thousands of words have been used to say that Britain's way through the financial crisis lies in gruelling toil. But most such messages boil down to little more than those six small words above—they were entered on a *Bullets* coupon by reader W. H. Cowmeadow, 13 Christchurch Street, Cambridge, and they won him £250 First Prize and Holiday.

As the father of five youngsters, this First Prize-winner has plenty of good uses for his prizemoney. And you, too, have dreams which this week's First Prize could realize.

Enter the coupon below and there is no reason why that £300 should not be yours!

"BULLETS" RESULT 1,589

FIRST PRIZE, £250 plus Swiss Holiday: C. Day, 91 Rowheath Road, King's Norton. **On Matrimony's Sea Cotton Triangles, Stoutest "Canvas."**

SECOND PRIZE, £25 plus Seaside Holiday: D. F. Powley, 3 Lime Road, "Shrublands" Estate, Gorleston: **We're Very Drab, But—Glowing On *History's* Canvas.**

THIRD PRIZE, £10 plus Seaside Holiday: K. Day, 6 Bowness Road, Walkley Lane, Sheffield, 6: **Overlooked — Mum's "Overtime"—Over Lifetime.**

THREE PRIZES of £5 plus Seaside Holiday: J. Naughton, 29 Keston Road, Tottenham, N.17: **Wolf At The Door—Yet "Human Family" Fighting!** J. R. N. Moss, c/o Peters, Lower Gorway Lodge, Woodway Road, Teignmouth: **Worth Having—"Quiet" Neighbours Who "Speak."** A. Selwyn, 6 Whitehall Road, Bristol, 5: **Holiday Souvenir—Button That *Burst* Off!**

SIX PRIZES of £2 10s.: F. Ayton, 2 Roskell Road, Putney, S.W.15: **How She Works — Unsparingly—Inspiringly.** Mrs. T. Crabtree, 60 Oakleigh Road, Clayton, near Bradford: **Horrible To Think About — Foreman's "We'll Move Mountains!"** W. T. Draper, 46 Mount Park Road, Ealing, W.5: **How She Transported—Me, Bride I Carried!** Mrs. E. Tidder, 7 Croft Street, Gorton, Manchester, 18: **Waiting To Be Pumped —*And* "Filled," Village Methuselah!** A. Vaughan, 11 Aurelia Gardens, Croydon: **Devil Of A Job—Trying To Stagger *Crises*!** C. G. Wise, 85 Pitcroft Avenue, Reading: **The German Problem — Reviving Industry *Without* Industrialists.**

Holidays arranged by Cook's—Cheques, 50 Season Tickets and 1,500 other Awards posted.

A misprint occurred in Result 1,588 and the third £2 10s. *Bullet* should have read: **Minding Baby—Tying—Trying—Satisfying!**

RULES

1. First Prize to best *Bullet* received, others in order of merit—the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.
2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.
3. As entry-fee, enclose P.O. or stamps value 1s. for four *Bullets*, or value 6d. to cover two *Bullets*. Plain paper entries are allowed. If using P.O. make payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* and Crosswords for entry-fees not exceeding 2s. if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.
4. Entries accepted only on condition that results of this week's Contests in JOHN BULL dated Sept. 20, also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding.

How to make a *Bullet*

To make a *Bullet*, add simply TWO, THREE or FOUR words of apt and original comment to any of the *Examples* below. To use an incomplete *Example*, first complete it with any one word in place of dotted line—then make your *Bullet*.

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Add 2, 3 or 4 Words to any of these "Examples"

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THE NEW BATTLE-CRY
WE NEED
REMEMBER AMERICA
WOMEN OF TODAY
THANKLESS TASK
IN LIFE'S SCHOOL
HAVE A HEART AND
KING FOOTBALL
WON'T WAIT
VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS
GAGGED AND BOUND
NOT DEAD YET
GRANDPA'S GRIEVANCE
PILING IT ON
TREAT FOR MOTHER
CAN'T GO WRONG
DECEIVING
BIT OF A MUDDLER

Incomplete "Examples"—see instructions.

OWNS THE.....
TRYING TO.....
WHEN I.....
PEOPLE WHO.....
"NOT MY.....!"
TO PAY THE.....

TRY THIS £150 CROSSWORD!

Waiting to be won in this week's Crossword—£100 in First Prize cash, £25 cash for Runners-up and additional awards value £25! Post square below by MON., Sept. 1.

BIG CHEQUES WON—XWORD 541

WINNING WORDS: ACROSS: 1, Ball. 2, Steak. 5, Toper. 9, Far. 12, Plank. 14, Stamps. DOWN: 1, Bottle. 3, Kink. 4, Troll. 6, Pale. 7, Man or Van. 8, Tones. 10, Rake. 11, Slum. 13, Lab. TWO £100 SHARERS: W. P. Larkin, 17 Field Way, Liverpool, 15; H. Ormiston, 145 Brynhyfryd, Swansea.

£25 CASH for Runners-up shared between 43 entrants. Awards value £25 shared amongst 36 prize-winners submitting 8 or more 3d. entries for this Contest.

Many entries were disqualified for use of pencil — note that Crossword entries *must* be in ink, although pencil is allowed for *Bullets*.

Across Clues — **XWORD 545**

1. Sharp withdrawal may leave them feeling sore
2. These are occasionally wired
7. Should have a good head
9. Many Victorian parents talked quite a lot of this
13. There's probably more in striking one than thoughtless folk imagine
14. In many cases these draw lovers still closer together

Down Clues

1. It's foolish to do this when giving evidence
3. Wicket may well refer to one
4. Manager of works ought to know his
5. A person who's this may well be stupid
6. Man of culture doesn't like his words to be considered this
8. Embroidering simple one may spoil its lines
10. Are often sticky to handle
11. Habitual drunkard may often feel like one
12. Is occasionally seen perched rather precariously

XWORD PRIZES value £150

1G	U		S	■	2	A	3G	E	4S
A	S	■	E	■	■	P	A	N	T
■	■	5S	A	■	6	■	■	■	■
7B	■	T	T	E	R	■	E	8R	F
L	■	■	■	9R	O	■	■	O	F
E	S	C	A	R	S	■	■	■	■
■	O	K	■	E	S	E	■	E	10G
11	■	■	12H	D	■	N	A	■	■
O	H	■	■	■	■	S	L	U	M
13T	E	■	T	545	14	A	L	K	S

HOW TO ENTER THIS COUPON

Complete Square in INK, giving your Answers to Clues above. Winner—sender of most meritorious set of Answers received—decided by Adjudication Committee on basis of aptness and accuracy. Ties divide. Entrants limited to one prize per Contest, but extra Awards value £25 amongst prize-winners submitting eight or more 3d. entries. Signature below is agreement to Rules.

For this one Square send 6d. (P.O. or stamps), covering entry-fee and dispatch of *Crossword Gazette* dated Sept. 13 for which enclose addressed *Bulletin and Gazette* Label without affixing stamp. If no *Gazette* required, your 6d. also covers second set of Answers on plain paper. Pencilled entries barred.

I enclose 6d. P.O.

No..... Closing Postmark. MON., SEPT. 1

Signed..... **545**

Address.....

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Liability for Son

"MY WIFE made life so intolerable that I have been living apart from her for seven years, but I make her a weekly allowance. My son, who is with her and is allowed to run wild, is now in trouble for stealing money. Can I be held responsible for his behaviour? Can the authorities make me return to my wife? This last would be quite unthinkable, but I want to know where I stand."

▸▸ You cannot be compelled to live with your wife, and unless the boy was under your control you could not be held responsible for his actions. If the magistrates consider that he is not kept under proper control he may be sent to an approved school.

Auction Dispute

"I WAS BIDDING for an article at a sale but the auctioneer knocked it down to a person at the other side of the room, despite the fact that I had made a higher bid. I believe he sold to a friend of his. When I protested he refused to put the article up for sale again. Can I report him for doing something illegal? If not, what is the position?"

▸▸ If a dispute arises as to who is the actual purchaser the auctioneer may put the article up again for bidding. This is usually one of the conditions of sale. Otherwise the matter is left to the auctioneer's discretion.

Homing Pigeons

"STROLLING ALONG the beach during my holiday I found a pigeon which had been drowned and washed up. There were rings on its legs bearing numbers. Can you tell me how to get into touch with the owner?"

▸▸ Send the rings to the National Homing Union, 22 Clarence Street, Gloucester. They will be forwarded to the owner of the bird.

Dependent Relatives

"DOES THE INCOME TAX allowance for dependent relatives apply to a married man, or is it only for bachelors and widowers?"

▸▸ The tax allowance for dependent relatives does not depend upon whether the taxpayer is single or married. To secure it he has to show that he maintains a relative who is incapacitated by age or infirmity and whose income does not exceed £70 a year. If it does exceed £70, the allowance (£50) is reduced by £1 for every £1 of the excess.

Remedy Against Tricksters

"BEGGING FOR HELP, a woman told me there was a warrant out for her husband and she had to get £4 before twelve o'clock. I felt sorry for them and lent the money. They promised to repay £1 a week, and I have since heard that they are constantly imposing on people in this way. Can I take them to court and expose them?"

▸▸ There seems to be no reason why you should not summons the debtors in the county court, but unless they are in a position to pay it may not be worth your while. If it can be proved that the money was obtained by means of a trick the police may take action.

Postwar Credits

"AS A WIDOW OF SIXTY I asked for payment of my late husband's postwar credits of £29 2s. 3d., but the authorities will not act until I pay £26 8s. 3d. arrears on his income tax for 1943-44 and earlier. I cannot afford to pay as I have only my pension of 26s."

▸▸ The validity of any postwar credit is dependent upon the full tax liability for that year having been met. The Inland Revenue are entitled to withhold the credits until arrears are paid, but will usually agree to set the one against the other.

Maternity Benefits

"UNTIL I MARRIED, a year ago, I paid National Health Insurance. I have now had my first child and do not know what benefits I am entitled to receive. Do all the approved societies pay the same amounts?"

▸▸ The statutory rates of benefits are the same for all approved societies, viz., £2; but some societies allow more under their additional benefits schemes. You should apply to your approved society for maternity benefit. If your husband is insured under the National Health Insurance Acts he can apply to his approved society for similar benefit.

HOW EXPERT WERE YOU?

Answers to Quiz on page 16

RELIGIONS. (1) First applied, contemptuously, when George Fox, the preacher, bade people "quake and tremble at the name of the Lord." (2) Prince Gautama, also called Siddhatta (Buddha means "The Enlightened"). (3) Taoism, one of the three great religions of China (the other two are Confucianism and Buddhism). (4) Their assent to the Prayer Book; many lost their livings for refusing. (5) No; an atheist says there is no God; an agnostic says we do not or cannot know whether there is.

IMPOSSIBILITIES. (1) No horse can run twice in the Derby, as it is a race for three-year-olds only. (2) It is not a bird, but a dish. (3) He never rode to York. (4) Brooklands is no longer used for motor racing. (5) One term precludes the other.

ISMS. (1) Bellicose patriotism—from Chauvin, a character in Cogniard's *Cocarde Tricolore* (1831). (2) Socialism would abolish the private ownership of the means of production—which is the basis of capitalism. (3) Trotskyism. (4) Home industries, by means of tariffs. (5) From the *fascio*, a bundle of sticks representing the strength of unity.

OLD MEN. (1) Voltaire. (2) Gladstone. (3) *In Good King Charles's Golden Days*. (4) Verdi. (5) Michelangelo.

BIRDS. (1) Golden eagle, kingfisher, sparrow. (2) Thirteen. (3) Beautifully coloured bird of the Pacific. (4) Its range of hearing does not include the lower sound frequencies of ordinary speech. (5) No.

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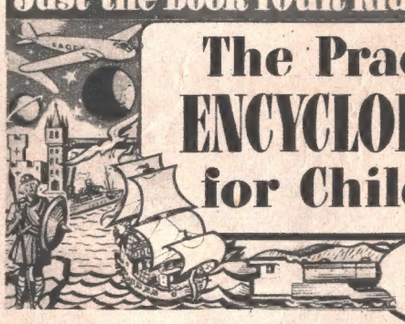

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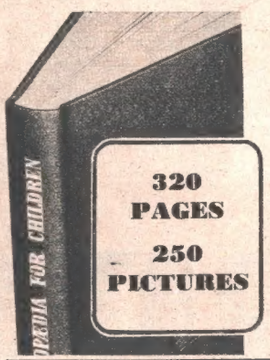

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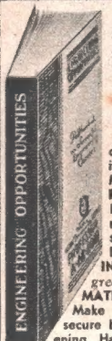

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